# Scourge of the Establishment: Albert Ogilvie and Tasmanian Society, 1890-1939.

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of History by Research

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October 2016

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the life of Albert George Ogilvie, the former Premier of Tasmania, and seeks to demonstrate that he was unique among Tasmanian leaders, before or since, in his drive and determination to succeed, while deliberately placing himself outside the local Establishment. Ogilvie was the grandson of convicts on both sides and grew up in Tasmania, far from high society or privilege. His humble beginnings did not prevent him from becoming a brilliant scholar, lawyer and politician and he became a thorn in the side of conservative politics and everything that implies.

Ogilvie's battles with the forces of conservatism were often bitter and he made many enemies, sometimes within his own Labor Party, as well as the old Establishment, which he hated. It was an attitude richly reciprocated by traditionalists. Ogilvie was born in a bedroom of the Victoria Tavern in 1890, where his parents were publicans. He died at the age of 49, while in office. He was one of the then youngest men to be elected to the Tasmanian Parliament and was the youngest King's Counsel in the Commonwealth. Ogilvie was impatient to reform Tasmania and to prod away at those more willing to march to the beat of a slower drum.

Ogilvie was many decades ahead of most contemporaries, mooting no fault divorce when a young Attorney-General in the Lyons Government, a stance opposed by his leader, a devout Roman Catholic. Ogilvie sought to abolish the ultra-conservative Legislative Council, along with the office of Tasmanian Governor. He brought in changes to hotel closing time and gambling restrictions. He promised, and delivered, the abolition of high school fees and delivered free medical services and cheap medicine. Among Ogilvie's major targets were those he branded 'wowsers' and his battles with these people, both inside and outside the Parliament, were entertaining and often bitter.

Ogilvie was a champion of the downtrodden in the post-Great Depression years when he was in office. He created employment through 'work for the dole' projects such as the road to the pinnacle of Mount Wellington and industrialisation of the state through hydro-electric schemes. He helped bring Jewish refugees to Australia, who were fleeing the Nazi and Fascist regimes in Europe. He also promoted tourism as a major panacea for a depressed economy, displaying a vision for Tasmania, previously only lightly touched.

This thesis is thematic, rather than chronological, and seeks to display the anti-Establishment aspect of his time in public life, rather than delving into the day-to-day political struggles.

Apart from an excellent biography by Michael Roe, Ogilvie's life has been under-reported by historians. This thesis hopes to show that Ogilvie was the most energetic and interesting of Tasmanian premiers, either before or after his five turbulent years in office.

**Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the many people who have assisted me in this project. Associate Professor Stefan Petrow has been a great source of encouragement and expertise as supervisor. Professor Michael Roe's previous studies of Albert Ogilvie provide matchless insights. Descendants of Albert Ogilvie have also contributed much through conversations and interviews. William Briggs and Grant Taylor were most helpful with advice, proof-reading and editing. Thanks is also due to Robyn Briggs, who has been required to share her partner with a long dead politician for the past two years.

# Contents

# INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the life of Tasmanian Premier Albert George Ogilvie and seeks to show that he was much more than a typical leader of Australia's smallest state. The grandson of convicts, born in a bedroom at the Victoria Tavern in Hobart where his parents were publicans, Ogilvie grew up far from high society and privilege. His mother had previously been a scullery maid at Government House and this may have had some effect on the young Albert, who later advocated the abolition of both the governorship and the Legislative Council during a disastrous 1931 election campaign. Ogilvie became a brilliant scholar, lawyer and politician. But he was never to cross that bridge into the world of privilege and power handed down without merit or effort. He resented such trappings and it was perhaps his lifelong spur to achieve great things, despite antiquated notions of being 'lowly born'.

Humble beginnings were not always a barrier to success in late and post-colonial Tasmania. Many convicts and their descendants rose to enjoy successful lives in business, politics and social status.[1] Yet, as the title of this thesis suggests, there was something more to Ogilvie than a local boy made good. He was a constant thorn in the side of the Establishment. It is this aspect of his career, and personality, which attracted my attention. To modern Tasmanians, even those of mature age, Ogilvie is not well known. They seem to know little of his reforming zeal, driven nature or even his accomplishments. As Henry Reynolds writes, `Ogilvie was tough and ruthless and had no time for the old Establishment, a sentiment richly reciprocated.'[2]

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[1] Alison Alexander, *Tasmania's Convicts: How Felons built a free Society*, Crows Nest, 2010, pp. 208-10.
[2] H. Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania*, Cambridge and Melbourne, 2012, p. 243

In many ways, Ogilvie was following in the footsteps of another famous Tasmanian, Andrew Inglis Clark, also an Attorney-General. Clark wanted to abolish every institution that conferred political power or personal privilege through birth. He urged participation in the political process by all persons, irrespective of gender or background. He opposed the monarchical and aristocratical style of the British Constitution and sought republican ideals for Australia.[3] Clark was espousing these ideals at the time of Ogilvie's birth in 1890.

The principal aim of this thesis is to shine a light on these aspects of Ogilvie's personality, and his background, to investigate and speculate on what drove him to succeed against incredible odds and adversity, as well as his own impatience and frustration.

I will argue that Ogilvie enjoyed the role of annoying his opponents. He seemed to thrive on a form of reverse snobbery. The local Establishment included the fiercely conservative Legislative Councillors, the traditional newspapers and the privileged class who all hated Ogilvie. Many of his greatest rivals came from his own political party and his battles with Joseph Lyons, the former Premier and Prime Minister, were legendary. His confrontations with those he described as 'wowsers' were entertaining and sometimes brutal. The differences between the two giants of Tasmanian politics in the 1930s is eloquently described by historian Michael Roe. 'Lyons was an accommodator, smiling, even smarming; Ogilvie an aggressor, sneering, even snarling.'[4] Despite attracting little love from the media, Ogilvie managed to top the poll personally in most elections and win a landslide victory in 1937, which paved the way for other Labor governments to bask in electoral glory for the three decades which followed. These quite moderate and conservative Labor leaders had none of the charisma, fire or radicalism of Ogilvie, but knew they had him to thank for a comfortable ride into the mid-twentieth century. Ogilvie's vision and intelligence will be demonstrated, along with his brave stance in fiscal matters, well explained in a parliamentary debate when he said 'the test of good government was not the condition of the Treasury finances but the happiness and prosperity of the people.'[5]

Another major argument will be that Ogilvie found himself outside the Establishment, not necessarily because of convict or working-class origins, but for his abrasive and irreverent

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[3] S. Petrow, 'Andrew Inglis Clark as Attorney-General,' in *A Living Force: Andrew Inglis Clark and the ideal of Commonwealth*, ed. R. Ely, Hobart, 2001, pp 36-70.

[4] M. Roe, ' A. G. Ogilvie and the Blend of Van Diemen's Land with Tasmania', *Bulletin of the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1986, pp. 43-4.

[5] *Mercury*, 27 September, 1934, p. 13.

personality. He had a vision of where he could take the state. He was certainly frustrated and angry with those who plodded or procrastinated when he wanted to run forwards, neither suffering fools gladly nor wasting time when time was so precious. It is as if he had premonitions, while in office, about his early demise at 49 years of age. By the time he entered politics Ogilvie was comfortably well off, working as a lawyer, sometimes for trade unions, although not of the union movement itself. This is where I see a 'Whitlamesque' comparison, so perfectly described by Noel Pearson in his speech at Whitlam's memorial service on 5 November 2014. Although Pearson had probably never heard of Ogilvie, it is true that both men knew not the barbs of discrimination, nor were they fiscally deprived, but they sought to make life better for working, or underclass, Australians who were disadvantaged or downtrodden.[6]

There is a form of vagueness about who, or what, is the Establishment. It can vary from Australian state to state, or have a different flavour for the Americans, the Irish or British. And it is not necessarily only about class. But most traditions about class and status came to us from Britain. The Establishment in Britain has been described as 'a handful of people whose family trees are rooted in the history books.' Writing fifty years ago, Christopher Hollis described the Establishment as a 'body of people, acting, consciously or subconsciously, together, holding no official posts through which they exercise their power, but nevertheless exercising a great influence on national policy.'[7] Defining the people who comprised the local Establishment during Ogilvie's life is fraught with difficulty. It is too easy to generalise about attendance at private schools, gentlemen's clubs or suburbs of residence. Yet it is hoped that by the end of this thesis that we can place Ogilvie well outside the local Establishment, despite his lofty place in Tasmanian life.

This thesis fits more comfortably into the genre of political biography, which is not a place usually favoured by its author. Such biography often tends to be written in sympathy with the subject, sometimes to the point of being sycophantic. Some political memoirs are at best more often fodder for the converted. Patrick O'Brien makes the point, rather haughtily, that these biographies are usually written by amateurs and present their subjects as 'extraordinary

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[6] Pearson delivered a powerful and emotional eulogy at Whitlam's memorial service on 5 November 2014.
[7] C. Hollis, `Parliament and the Establishment,' in *The Establishment: A Symposium*, ed. Hugh Thomas, London, 1959, pp. 171-2.

and omnipotent or alternatively as predictable individuals whose characteristics and actions form the basis for generalisations about the governments of the day.'[8] He compares such biographies as being of little more worth than the lives of other modern celebrities, whose biographies flood the bookstores and media outlets.[9]

Jill Roe, biographer of Miles Franklin, argues that biography is not for the faint hearted and nor is it a genre admired by everyone. Roe also makes the point that the 2011 Biography of the Year award was shared by singer-songwriter Paul Kelly and comedian Anh Do, which were popular autobiographies.[10] There is clearly an appetite for modern achievement and the joint prize winners had substantial things to say. Doug Munro argues that it is unrealistic to expect biographers, or historians, to divest themselves of feelings and values when dealing with the crooked timber of humanity and that, sooner or later, one's preferences and antipathies will intrude. Personal feelings and values are ever present.[11]

These arguments provide valuable food for thought when attempting biography of political identities. When embarking on this project I was mindful of my own political bias, but ready to explore the best and worst of Albert Ogilvie. My own bias is not so much of left or right, rather it is a general disdain for the political process and for those who inhabit it. I believe Ogilvie's life is worth examining for events in and outside the world of politics and that his contribution was unique in Tasmanian twentieth-century life. This thesis will attempt to show Ogilvie as the scourge of the Establishment, while bypassing many of the day-to-day political battles with his opponents, which have been well recorded elsewhere. Some political content is inevitable. He was, after all, a highly combative and successful player within the law courts and the Parliament. It was his anti-Establishment attitude which interested me.

The arrival of the twentieth century provided Tasmania with many colourful political characters and success stories in business, agriculture and the law. It will be demonstrated that convict heritage was not of itself a hurdle of major proportion to success in Tasmania. What is more interesting, is how Ogilvie found himself on the outskirts of the Establishment, despite his undoubted intelligence, ability and drive. A closer examination of the way Tasmanian

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[8] P. O'Brien, 'Is Political Biography a Good Thing?' *Contemporary British History,* Vol. 10, Issue 4, pp. 60-66.
[9] O'Brien, `Is Political Biography a Good Thing?', pp. 60-66.
[10] Jill Roe, `Biography Today: A Commentary', *Australian Historical Studies,* Vol. 3, pp. 107-18.
[11] Doug Munro, `The "intrusion" of personal feelings: Biographical Dilemmas.' in *Flinders Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. 30, 2014, p. 3-20.

society worked is required and Ogilvie's story is a perfect example of that. Or, on the other hand, was he a special and unique case?

An abundance of primary sources is available on the political and public career of Ogilvie. These have been well-mined by historians and include parliamentary records and reportage in newspapers. At one level, this seems to be of particular advantage. Newspaper reports and parliamentary debates paint a vivid picture of the rancour and ferocity of the arguments between Ogilvie and his opponents. But they do not explain the reasons, or the background, for Ogilvie's self-positioning outside the Establishment of the day, nor the intricacies of the class system, tribal loyalties and society in general. Close examination, and interpretation, of primary sources is therefore necessary to understand these considerations which are at the heart of this thesis.

This thesis takes a thematic approach, rather than a chronological one, in dealing with various aspects of Ogilvie's life. It is intended to examine the ways in which Ogilvie became, and relished, the role of being a thorn in the side of the Establishment and to display that in chronological order seems fraught with difficulty.

The first chapter on Ogilvie's family background and early life seems especially relevant and I have been fortunate to meet many of the former Premier's descendants. They include his daughter Pat Rennie, still living at the time of writing, who was 16 when her father died in 1939. Conversations with her provide a valuable insight into the personality and family life of Ogilvie. Other descendants have been helpful in forming a picture of Ogilvie the man – rather than politician – although one must be mindful of personal handed down anecdotes, especially those lovingly offered, but sugar-coated.

The value of oral history is often fiercely debated, especially the oral history boom, which has evolved in the past few decades. Louise Douglas and Peter Spearritt remind us that the memory process is nebulous and complex. The memories of children from the age of 11 onwards, previously almost photographic, begin to go into decline, but the total memory capacity has increased. By the age of 30 there is a slow deterioration, which continues into old age. And a process of retention and rejection of information continues through life.[12] We only need to think about twentieth-century remembrances of the Holocaust, the Vietnam War protests or environmental debates to know how difficult it is to interpret oral history with all

[12] L. Douglas and P. Spearritt, 'Talking History: The use of Oral Sources' in G. Osborne and W. F. Mandle, eds, *New History: Studying Australia Today*, Sydney, 1982, pp. 51-68.

its prejudices and 'selective memory'. Alessandro Portelli gives the discourse an interesting slant by saying that oral sources are credible but with a different *credibility*. He argues that the importance of oral history may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism and desire emerge.[13] It is also a serious responsibility faithfully to report what the interviewee is saying without interpreting too heavily when the interviewer/historian comes to digest these statements or beliefs. In the preparation of this thesis I have been mindful to leave out some anecdotes which were not witnessed by the interviewee but were handed down stories, possibly true.

The relationship between Ogilvie and Joseph Lyons, detailed in Chapter Two, is worth a chapter of its own. The struggles between the two giants of Tasmanian politics in the 1930s indicate how much Lyons moved away from his political beginnings and how it estranged him from Ogilvie.

Chapter Three focuses on the extraordinary political journey to the top, despite many setbacks, which would have blunted, or destroyed the chances, and ambitions, of a lesser man. Ogilvie's relationship with the forces of the conservative right, including the bulk of the Legislative Councillors, Tasmania's regional newspapers and old boys' networks, such as the Tasmanian Club, are examined.

The focus of Chapter Four is the way events at home and abroad shaped and solidified Ogilvie's attitude to the Establishment. It will look at the overseas jaunt in 1935 and the meetings with Benito Mussolini and other European leaders. This experience, related by his own pen and published in Michael Roe's biography, provide an insight into Ogilvie's vision and concerns about the dramatic events looming in Europe, and closer to home.[14]

Ogilvie's commitment to human rights and his reforming zeal with social issues will be examined in Chapter Five. He mooted no fault divorce nearly 40 years before a reforming Whitlam federal government. He sought to find homes for Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi and Fascist horrors of Europe and he warned of militaristic threats and dangers closer to home in the years before the war with Japan. Ogilvie abolished high school fees, promoted tourism and created employment as a means of escaping the worst of the Great Depression. Yet, he was

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[13] A. Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different?' in R. Perks and R. Thomson eds, *The Oral History Reader, London, 1998,* pp. 32-42.

[14] Michael Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha: World-wise Tasmanians*, Hobart, 2008, pp.1-3.

a flawed man, who made many mistakes as he attempted to rush a mainly conservative Tasmanian society into change many were not ready to accept.

Ogilvie's vision will be examined in Chapter Six, along with comparisons to Great Depression leaders such as Jack Lang, of New South Wales, and United States President F. D. Roosevelt. It will also examine the way Ogilvie saw himself and how others saw him. Ogilvie's similarity with Lang on the issues of getting Australia, and its states, through the Great Depression is of particular interest. Lloyd Robson has written that Ogilvie echoed the fiery Lang in drawing attention to the 'pitiful exhibition of Lyons and the other state premiers down on their knees, begging the Commonwealth Bank board for some tokens with which to trade.'[15] Lang and Ogilvie shared the passion that paying off loans to British banks while the Australian people suffered provided a clear choice. When Leader of the Opposition in 1933 Ogilvie posed the question at a meeting in Launceston's Albert Hall: 'Which is the greater obligation. That the starving babies should be fed or the interest paid?'[16]

This thesis seeks to show the full face of a political leader both loved and hated and argues that Tasmanian public life had not seen such a figure before his time and certainly not since. It will be argued that the life of Albert George Ogilvie has been under-examined, apart from the insightful writings of Michael Roe, but it is a life well worthy of wider attention.

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[15] L. Robson, *A Short History of Tasmania*, Melbourne, 1985, p. 126.
[16] *Examiner*, 9 June 1933, p. 7.

# CHAPTER ONE

## EARLY LIFE, CAREER AND PERSONALITY.

When Albert George Ogilvie was born on 10 March 1890 in a back room of the Victoria Tavern in Hobart, there were few obvious hints that he would play such a spectacular role in the life of Tasmania. Yet a closer examination of his forbears and upbringing provides some evidence that a brilliant and successful young lawyer was in the making and that a political career was at least possible and maybe probable.

While his grandfather George Ogilvie and his wife Caroline arrived on convict ships in 1842 and 1841 respectively, George's convict records show that he was able to read and write, which suggests their children and grandchildren may have profited greatly with education usually only then available to those of superior class. Police records say that George, a blacksmith, had previous convictions for theft when he was charged with stealing a shirt and a pair of cotton stockings. He had a tattoo of a woman on his right arm and he measured 5'5". According to these records he was of 'bad character and disposition' and we can assume that the constabulary of Aberdeen were pleased to be rid of him.[1] But George received his ticket of leave in 1845, married Caroline Justin at Hamilton on 20 April 1846 and was a free man by 1847 when James Ogilvie, father of Albert, was born.

We will never know, from family background, influences or achievements, how much import the ideas of religion, politics and culture of the time had on the Ogilvie family, especially Albert. The fierce anti-Establishment attitude personified in Albert could have had its genesis in his father, Jimmy Ogilvie. Albert seems to have inherited a flair for performing in public from his father, as a politician and lawyer, rather than as an actor and musician. Sectarian prejudices and religious conviction are also vague. We can be tempted to assume that Scotsman George may have converted to Catholicism when marrying Caroline, but they were married in an Anglican church at Hamilton. Jimmy's Irish bride Kate Magee is presumed to be Catholic. But such assumption is faulty. Not even Albert's daughter Pat Rennie, born in 1923, is certain of when the Ogilvies became devout in the Catholic faith.[2] Jimmy was a Freemason

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[1] Con 18-1-30, Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office.
[2] Interview with Pat Rennie 2 November 2014.

and we cannot be certain how committed Kate was to her religion at that stage. Richard Davis suggests that Ogilvie was clearly alive to his Irish heritage. His political style is described as Tammany Hall and his emphasis on liquor and sport appears characteristic of many Irish-Australian politicians of the period.[3]

Jimmy Ogilvie's death on 12 July 1893 rated an obituary in the *Mercury*. He had joined his father in the business of brass-moulding in his younger days, but was most famous as an entertainer, marksman and hotel keeper of what the newspaper described as an 'old fashioned hostelry'. Jimmy would play the melodeon to entertain customers. He had 'hosts of friends and there will be many who will miss his jocularity and open-heartedness.'[4] Jimmy's widow Kate had been in domestic service at Government House before taking on the work of publican and her tales of late nineteenth century snobbery may have influenced young Albert. When quizzed on what higher honours Albert may have sought, Pat Rennie suggested that maybe federal politics or the High Court could have beckoned, but definitely not Government House. Mrs Rennie suggests that her father's proudest achievement, apart from being state premier, was becoming the youngest KC in the Commonwealth at the age of 35.[5]

Albert may have inherited genetic advantages for a public man from his talented father, but Jimmy did not live long enough to be of other influence. Albert was only three when Jimmy died and his brother Eric was a mere babe. Kate was quite quick to remarry. She became the wife of Frank Westbrook on 27 June 1894. The marriage celebrant was the Reverend Father Kelsh.[6] The family, including the two young boys, were by now firmly Catholic. Kate, who now assumed the more 'dignified' name of Catherine, continued in the hotel business, but of a far more salubrious variety. The step-father seems to have been of a more sober and steady nature. Business seems to have been good. Frank Westbrook was the proprietor of several hotels in southern Tasmania, including Hobart's Ship Hotel, the Victoria Tavern, previously owned by Jimmy Ogilvie, and the Star and Garter Hotel in New Norfolk. Westbrook had a minor blemish on his otherwise 'respectable' reputation. When at the New Norfolk hotel he was charged with serving rum six percent under-strength. In his defence Westbrook denied watering down the liquor and said it was the crime of a supplier, not himself, and that it had been tested three times previously by police and health inspectors and found to be fully potent.

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[3] Richard Davis, *Irish Traces on Tasmanian History 1803-2004*, Hobart, 2005, p.115.
[4] *Mercury*, 13 July 1893, p.2.
[5] Pat Rennie interview, 2 November 2014.
[6] *Mercury*, 8 September 1894, p. 4.

The Police Court Magistrate was unimpressed and fined Westbrook £1 with costs.[7] The case was dealt with two days before Ogilvie's electoral triumph in June 1934, leaving insufficient time for any muck-raking by Ogilvie's political opponents.

Despite the minor offence Westbrook seems to have been well-regarded and successful in business. This would account for the family, by now strongly Catholic, being able to send young Albert off to boarding school at St. Patrick's College in Ballarat. The schools he attended before that included a stint at Buckland's School in Hobart. This establishment was said to be oriented towards Anglicanism and social elites. A contemporary at the school damned it as attempting to purvey the 'silly snobbish idea of a gentleman imported from England.'[8] It is easy to form a picture of the young Ogilvie, reacting to the prejudices of his day and eager to poke away at the pillars of society, on the outside of it but more than a little proud to be so.

Pat Rennie recalls her father reminiscing about his nervous journey on the train from Melbourne to Ballarat, awaiting the best and worst the Christian Brothers were to deal him.[9] He was a successful student and matriculated in 1906. The College annual of 1939 described him as a distinguished ex-student who went back to his native island determined to succeed.[10] Although the obituary was written in hindsight and 33 years after his time at the college it speaks of his determination and ambition. No such Catholic college then existed in Hobart.

The decision to send both Albert and his brother Eric to Ballarat proved to be a winner, although a young man with Albert's ability and determination may have succeeded at any school. Educational opportunity changed the lives of many successful Irish-Australian achievers. Ogilvie is listed among the notable alumni in a college history, along with former Victorian Premier Steve Bracks and Cardinal George Pell.[11] The Ogilvie family story is mirrored by the Flanagans. The grandfather of Man Booker prize winner Richard Flanagan was an illiterate fettler on the railways. His son, Arch, enjoyed a good education, becoming a school principal, and Richard's siblings have gained success as writers, teachers and a doctor.[12]

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[7] *Mercury*, 21 June 1934, p.5.
[8] Michael Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha: World-wise* Tasmanians, Hobart, 2008, p. 6.
[9] Pat Rennie interview, 2 November 2014.
[10] Obituary, *St Patrick's Christian Brothers' Annual*, 1936. p.62.
[11] P. C. McNaughtin, *History and Heritage: St Patrick's College Ballarat 1893-1993*, Ballarat, 1993.
[12] Richard Flanagan likes to tell the story of the rise of the Flanagan clan, via educational opportunities, and refers to it regularly.

Some descendants of Albert Ogilvie found their way into the law and politics. Albert's nephew, also named Albert George Ogilvie, recalls his father Eric often retelling the story of how Albert and Eric's mother Kate and stepfather Frank Westbrook took the boys aside to explain that they were determined to see they had a good education, rather than become drinkers and gamblers like many role models they could see about them.[13] They would expect to find it difficult away from the family home and that some of the Christian Brothers were known for their cruelty and strictness, but the college had a good reputation for training bright students. Albert Ogilvie [the younger], who also became a successful lawyer, said he had been inspired by the scholastic and political success of his namesake.[14]

The Christian Brothers started up in 1911 at St Virgil's, where Albert attended classes in Latin to assist in his law degree at the University of Tasmania. Eric Ogilvie was a senior boy in that year and the year book lists him so, but Albert was not on the official roll. He does appear in a report on the inaugural school athletics carnival. Eric won a handicap mile walk and Albert participated in races for those dubbed old collegians. These were old boys of various Catholic colleges around the nation. The Christian Brothers by 1911 had more than 40 schools and many Tasmanians, like Albert, had attended these colleges as boarders. For the record, Albert placed third in the 100, 220 and 440 yards events. Among the students were Albert's step-brothers from the Westbrook marriage. One of them, Victor Westbrook, later became the godfather of Pat Rennie and is remembered fondly by her as a great support before and after Albert's death when she was 16.[15] Another very interesting student among the inaugural classes was Eric Balfe, who later became chief political writer and editor of the *Mercury*. The significance for Ogilvie of this schoolboy connection will be explained in a later chapter. St Virgil's first crop of students included those studying at senior public, sub-junior, fourth form and primary form level. Albert Ogilvie was the inaugural president of the Old Collegians Association when it was formed in 1917, just six years after the opening of the school. This suggests that old boy loyalties played a strong role in the development of the young lawyer.[16]

Sport also played a vital role in Tasmanian Catholic and independent schools. The rivalries extended to the football fields and running tracks in a feverish tribalism. Right up until the end of the twentieth century a highlight of school athletic carnivals was the chanting and

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[13] Interview with Albert George Ogilvie, 13 May, 2015.
[14] Albert Ogilvie interview, 13 May 2015.
[15] *College Record 1911, St Virgil's College Archives*.
[16] Tim Jetson, *St Virgil's College 1911-1994*, Hobart, 1994, p.21.

flag-waving of groups from Anglican Hutchins School and St Virgil's College. While mostly good-natured, it could sometimes go well past the standards of healthy competition. These rivalries were deadly serious to the parents it seems. In his history of the Hutchins School, Geoffrey Stephens sums up the competitive nature of school sport by reporting on some mixed results in 1953, including a narrow loss to St Virgil's in swimming and a 'dismal' fifth in rowing. 'It was not what the parents were paying for – they wanted results – academic results as well.'[17] Sectarian divisions in society were not exclusive to Tasmanian life, of course, but the way in which they were played out provide hints and evidence of how Albert Ogilvie's views were shaped, not to mention his growing determination to succeed.

The Tasmania in which Ogilvie was becoming a leading player was certainly tribal and divided on grounds of religion and class. Protestantism, Catholicism and Freemasonry were all evident with little border-crossing. Membership of certain golf and bowls clubs and various gentlemen's clubs were restricted to those of a particular background. For example, the Tasmanian Club was then comprised of gentleman farmers, Establishment lawyers, army officers and seemed almost obligatory membership for those occupying the seats of the conservatively dominated Legislative Council. The only Labor politician granted membership was Roy Fagan, a leading light in the Cosgrove Governments of the 1950s.[18] Fagan became a club member in 1943, at which time he was not in the Parliament, but a highly regarded barrister and solicitor.[19] Fagan was admitted to the Bar in 1934, but appears to have been politically unaligned at that time and was an agnostic 'lapsed' Catholic.[20] He was encouraged to stand for the House of Assembly by Premier Cosgrove in 1946 and became Attorney-General that year.

In Bertram Wicks' history of the Tasmanian Racing Club the links between the perceived 'upper class' are well demonstrated. The inaugural meeting to establish the TRC was held at the Tasmanian Club premises in 1874. The nineteen inaugural members of the TRC were almost exclusively members of the Tasmanian Club. The TRC, from its origins, was to be the property or plaything of the gentlemen class. Wicks states emphatically that the Tasmanian Club's members were the driving force behind the new racing club. The importance of the connection cannot be overstated. 'The Tasmanian Club was the real seat of power in the

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[17] G. Stephens, *The Hutchins School, Macquarie Street Years, 1846-1965,* Hobart, 1979, p. 291.
[18] Peter Bennison, *The Tasmanian Club 1861-2011*, Hobart, 2011, p. 256.
[19] Bennison, *The Tasmanian Club*, p.377.
[20] *Mercury*, 9 August 1934, p. 6.

colony at the time,' writes Wicks, 'it was the capacity of men of influence to draw to them other men of influence that got racing going at Elwick.'[21]

Albert Ogilvie was rarely to darken the door of the Tasmanian Club, nor join the ranks of the TRC, despite his interest in the turf. Ogilvie chose another turf club, The Tasmanian Amateur Jockey Club, more aligned with working-class Tasmanians. He also became involved with trotting and greyhound racing, regarded then and now as more of the working-class variety of racing. During the 1920s betting was illegal and interest in greyhound racing was only lukewarm. Ogilvie, when he finally reversed the gaming laws, helped the sport flourish. A track was opened at the Tasmanian Cricket Association ground on the Domain. Ogilvie was keen to support a working-class sport and this was a politically successful manoeuvre at the ballot box and a way of positioning himself as apart from the Establishment.[22] Ogilvie was following a lead of New South Wales Premier Jack Lang in the promotion of greyhound racing. Lang had declared the greyhound the 'working man's racehorse'. Lang legalised betting on greyhounds and Tasmania followed soon afterwards. Ogilvie opened the TCA track on 30 January 1935, when 4000 people attended the first meeting. Ogilvie had somehow managed to get legislation for gambling on greyhounds through the Parliament, despite opposition from the conservative Legislative Council.[23] These divisions and distinctions in Tasmanian social life sometimes worked in reverse. The 'upper classes' may have controlled the fledgling meetings of the 'sport of kings', but Freemasons encouraged fellow travellers into the police force and Catholics dominated the ranks of bookmakers.[24]

Although many Australians like to refer to a romantic idea of a classless society, the reality was that colonial Tasmania inherited its class structure and ideas from Britain. By the middle of the nineteenth century, up until the birth of Albert Ogilvie, a four-tiered class structure was evident. The population was divided into gentry, professionals, tenant farmers and landless labourers.[25] Class war, of the dramatic revolutionary European variety, did not happen. Although the exercise of elite power was never absolute, conflict and antagonism were

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[21] Bertram Wicks, *Men of Influence: A History of the Tasmanian Racing Club*, Hobart, 1999, pp. 9-10.
[22] Alison Alexander and David Young, 'Dog Racing', in *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, ed. Alison Alexander, Hobart, 2005, p. 108.
[23] D. Young, *Sporting Island: A History of Sport and Recreation in Tasmania*, Hobart, 2005, pp. 196-7.
[24] I have heard many such stories from police officers and a friend of my father, Peter Salter, seeking to change careers from butcher to bookmaker told me in 1963 he was assured by Catholic friends there would be no impediment to him gaining a bookmaker's licence, quite to the contrary.
[25] Shayne Breen, `Class', in *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, A. Alexander (ed.), Hobart, 2005, pp 408-14.

common. Former convicts often annoyed their former masters by pleasing themselves when to work. Shayne Breen argues that by the 1880s a new generation of middle-class lawyers, politicians and businessmen emerged who were hostile to landed privilege.[26] The period also was a fertile time for change and both the major churches were being influenced by social issues and becoming more political. In May 1894 the Anglican Bishop of Tasmania even advocated a mild socialism at his synod.[27] Roman Catholic bishop, Patrick Delaney, openly denounced greed, privilege and injustice in September 1894.[28]

While society may have been changing, the social hierarchy at the top remained very much what it had been. The large landowners and the pastoralists of the midlands stayed at the top, despite the ravages of the depression of the early 1890s. Wealthy merchants were gradually being accepted into the upper classes. W. A Townsley writes that many of the vetoes in Parliament were decided in advance in the Tasmanian Club.[29] When the club was established in 1861 its members made up 40 percent of both Houses of the Tasmanian Parliament. Of the seventy inaugural members army officers, merchants, lawyers, judges and pastoralists/farmers made up 64 percent of the club.[30] By the time of Ogilvie's birth in 1890 there had been some changes. The pastoralists/farmers comprised thirty-two out of the total membership of 141. The legal fraternity numbered twenty-six and there were twelve merchants and seventeen medical men.

The influence of the Tasmanian Club during Ogilvie's rise to prominence may be overstated. Membership of the club seems to have been important for some people and not others. In the club's history, published in 2011, there is only one mention of Ogilvie having visited the club. Among those gathered for a lunch there in 1934 were the Hydro-Electric Commissioner, and the Police Commissioner. It may have been a case of having to invite the newly-elected Premier, like him or not.[31] If that were the case, it must have brought a smile to the face of Ogilvie, as until then no Labor man had ever been accepted as a member. Ogilvie may have taken the attitude of wise-cracking Groucho Marx, who famously declared he would never want to belong to any club which would have him as a member [32]

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[26] Breen, `Class', p.3.
[27] R. P. Davis, *Bishop John Edward Mercer, a Christian Socialist in Tasmania*, University of Tasmania Occasional Paper: No. 34, Hobart, 1982.
[28] W. A. Townsley, *Tasmania: From Colony to Statehood 1803-1945*, Hobart, 1992, p. 149.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] Bennison, *Tasmanian Club,* p. 215
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] Groucho Marx, *Groucho and Me*, New York, 1995, p.3.

Elsewhere, professional men such as doctors, lawyers, clergy, engineers and even newspaper proprietors were making their way into at least the second rung of the class structure. Although he was not yet born, it was into this scenario that Albert Ogilvie was to be introduced and influenced. What gave him the confidence and courage to see for himself a place in this changing order cannot be certain. But it will become clear in later chapters of this thesis that Ogilvie knew he belonged in the Tasmania of the early twentieth century and that he had developed a hatred of Establishment figures and it was clearly reciprocated.

After the young Albert matriculated with such good results from St Patrick's at Ballarat, university and the law seemed inevitable. His continued success at tertiary level must have steeled him for the fight and spurred him to achieve. And achieve he did. If there were prejudices against young Catholic boys at university and later at the practice of the law they did not affect Ogilvie. He proved to be a brilliant student, winning the James Backhouse Walker prize for the most proficient student. He secured eight credits and two passes. In that year, 1913, he passed his final law examinations and was articled to the law firm of Ewing, Hodgman.[33]

That Ogilvie served his articles with Norman Ewing seems like a case of strange bedfellows. Ewing had an interesting political career. He was an unsuccessful Protectionist candidate for the Tweed in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly elections of 1895.[34] He was an independent member for Swan in the Western Australian parliament from 1897 to 1901 when he became a Free Trade Senator. After moving to Tasmania, for the benefit of his wife's health, he narrowly missed election to the Senate in 1906 before helping establish the Progressive League the next year and in April 1909 won the House of Assembly seat of Franklin for the Anti-Socialist Party. He was re-elected as a Liberal in 1912 and served for three years. His legal partner Thomas Hodgman also held a seat from 1909-1912 as an anti-socialist. Just what kind of political influence, positive or negative, these two had on young Ogilvie is hard to imagine.[35]

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[33] R. Davis, *100 Years: A Centenary History of the Faculty of Law, University of Tasmania 1893-1993, Hobart, 1993*, p. 24.

[34] Scott Bennett, 'Ewing, Norman Kirkwood (1870-1928)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 8, Melbourne, 1981, accessed online 19 March 2015.

[35] *Ibid.*

So rapid was Ogilvie's development that he was admitted to the bar in 1914 at the age of 23. [36] He later joined T. A. Okines in a legal partnership, which was to have difficult repercussions in later years, as will be discussed in a later chapter. Thomas Okines was a much better political fit for Ogilvie, although Okines' political career was as chequered as any. Okines stood as an independent for the Legislative Council seat of Queenborough in 1906, when he was 36. He declared no interest in party politics at that time.[37] In 1916 Okines was again unsuccessful in his bid to enter politics. He described himself then as a liberal and progressive.

By this time Okines and Ogilvie were legal partners and firmly committed to the abolition of the Legislative Council. In 1925, when Ogilvie was Attorney-General in the Lyons Government, Okines, now a Labor man, stood for the seat of Hobart in the Legislative Council, with a policy of abolishing the Council from within. Okines told a rally in June that the only way to get rid of the Upper House was to get sufficient numbers of Labor men into the House and then vote themselves out of office. He told the rally he was determined to get elected and he would work to have the Upper House abolished. He described the Council as an anachronism and appealed to voters to give him the opportunity to help rid Tasmania of it. On the same platform Ogilvie said it would strengthen the hand of the Government to have Labor members elected to the Legislative Council.[38] Abolition of the Upper House was a particularly favourite theme of Ogilvie's. On election night there was hope for Okines. He topped the poll with 1306 votes out of 4736, almost double that of C. J. Eady, a famous cricketer and a conservative, with 656. The lengthy cut up of preferences resulted in fellow conservatives pushing Eady over the line.[39]

Success came early in so many fields for Ogilvie. When first elected to the Tasmanian Parliament in 1919 at the age of 29 he became one of the youngest parliamentarians in the nation at that time. Even before he was in the Parliament, Ogilvie knew who his enemies were and how to rally support among working-class Tasmanians. In 1919, when attempting to win a seat in the Franklin electorate, he travelled as far away as Campbell Town to rail against the 'landed gentry' and the forces of conservatism, right in their own backyard.[40] While on the

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[36] Obituary, *St Patrick's College Christian Brothers Annual*, 1939, p. 62.
[37] *Mercury*, 20 June 1925, p. 6.
[38] *Examiner*, 16 June 1925, p. 5.
[39] *Daily Telegraph (Launceston)*, 24 June 1925, p.4.
[40] *The World (Hobart)*, 8 May 1919. p.7

platform, Ogilvie spoke of issues such as the minimum wage and taxation policies. But he went provocatively further to say that if re-elected his party would make Tasmania what it should be – a garden – and not a sheep run. He pointed out that Campbell Town was surrounded by huge estates, employing very little labour.[41] Even though he was far from his own future electorate, Ogilvie knew his remarks would be reported and have sounded sweet to the ears of potential Labor voters.

On the sporting field the young Ogilvie was as competitive and busy as in the law and politics. He was one of the nation's best handball players, a sport which occupied much of his spare time at St Patrick's College. He was a tennis player of well above average ability and an outstanding amateur boxer. The *Mercury* of 1923, when Albert was a young Member of Parliament, reported on a tennis competition between clubs Alverstoke and New Norfolk. Alverstoke was the Ogilvie home in New Town, which had a tennis court in its grounds. At this inter-club contest Ogilvie won both his matches in straight sets.[42] Having your own tennis court seems a very Establishment thing, although Albert's legal career was now flourishing and the family, under the guidance of his step-father Frank Westbrook, had done well in the previous decade. The move from his home in Goulburn Street, West Hobart, to a grander large house in New Town suggests the legal practice was flourishing and the Ogilvies were comparatively well off. But, as Michael Roe points out, tenants always occupied parts of the large house and it was also home to several relatives.[43]

Ogilvie may have done well financially from his law practice but he appears to have made little money out of being Premier. When he won the election of 1934, Ogilvie chose not to take an individual ministry, as had been the usual way. He was highly involved in the decision-making of all ministries, but was not in receipt of any ministerial salary. When he travelled to Europe in 1935 for King George V's Jubilee, he was responsible for the fares and expenses of his wife and daughter. Ogilvie received a very modest sum from Tasmanian taxpayers' funds, a mere ten shillings and sixpence per day, while travelling.[44]

There is a certain irony in the fiscal status of parliamentarians then and now. The cause of much angst in the twenty-first century is political donations to parties and individual

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[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Mercury,* 8 March, 1927, p. 12.
[43] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p.12.
[44] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 32

members, be they from large corporate organisations, trade unions or elsewhere. The boot seems to have been on the other foot in 1935, according to a debate in the House of Assembly. Ogilvie described the seeking of donations to sporting clubs and community groups as 'nothing more or less than a form of polite blackmail.'[45] He was speaking of a bill to amend the Electoral Act, which would provide a penalty of £50 for any member 'who offers, promises, or gives to or for any club, association or body a gift, donation or prize.' What seems like an extreme measure was caused by a flurry of begging letters, which Ogilvie brandished in the House. Among the examples was one from a worker for the Methodist Church, who asked for a donation to match that given by a fellow member, Mr Dwyer. Another said: 'I would be pleased if you would give a donation to our draughts club. Sir John Evans and Mr Pearsall have given a guinea each, and I presume you will.' Another suggested that as the Premier's law firm did business in the Channel area, he should donate to a local regatta. Ogilvie claimed to have received a hundred such letters in the past three months. The debate included some banter when Ogilvie suggested John Soundy, a successful businessman, could afford to donate because not everybody had a purse as long as his. Soundy retorted that 'it was not as long as yours', to which Ogilvie replied: 'I wish you meant it.' Sir Walter Lee, who had been deposed as Premier the previous year, agreed that it was most unfair that members should be singled out to pay their way to ensure support. Sir Walter said in previous years, when members were not paid at all, they bribed electors with their own money.[46]

As suggested earlier in this thesis, Ogilvie was highly competitive, verging on the fanatical, on and off the sporting field. This attitude did not diminish with the passing years. Just three months before his death The *Mercury's* Day by Day columnist wished him well under a headline which called him a 'Young Old Parliamentarian'.[47]Although the newspaper had experienced its up and downs with Ogilvie, the columnist conceded he was a tireless worker, to be seen in his office early in the morning and late at night. He was said to play as hard as ever, despite his heavy load of duties: 'Ask anyone 10 years his junior who has stood up to him for three or four gruelling sets of tennis during the weekend.'[48] Published a day ahead of Ogilvie's birthday, the columnist wrote that he hoped all will forget what political sins he may have committed, or omitted, and they would join in wishing him many happy returns of

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[45] *Mercury*, 28 November 1935, p. 11.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Mercury*, 9 March 1939, p. 8.
[48] *Ibid.*

the day.[49] Exactly three months later Ogilvie was dead, spending his final hours on a golf course. He took a prominent role in swimming, rowing, football and skating. He was becoming a keen beginner at golf when he collapsed and died on the course at Warburton, Victoria, a both tragic and ironic ending for such a driven man. He was squeezing in a game of golf while in Melbourne for a Loan Council meeting. He was also a committee member of the Hobart Turf Club and had a keen interest in trotting and greyhound racing. As previously mentioned, these were pursuits both then and now strongly identified with working-class Tasmanians.[50]

Family anecdotes confirm an ultra-competitive nature in the young and not so young Ogilvie. Pat Rennie recalls her father, his brother Eric and his half-brother Victor Westbrook being highly competitive and great risk-takers on and off the sporting field. Family anecdotes include stories that the Ogilvie brothers would run from the city to The Springs, regarded as the halfway mark to the pinnacle of Mount Wellington, as training for amateur boxing matches.[51] The mountain was always a source of enjoyment for Ogilvie and Pat Rennie said he loved being there and comparing it favourably with alpine marvels in Europe. Perhaps his jaunts to the mountain as a youth influenced his decision to build the road to the pinnacle, one of his most remembered achievements in the public eye. Albert and his half-brother Ted Westbrook, after purchasing new cars, were adamant their vehicle was the fastest and most powerful. A race from Hobart to Launceston was hastily organised one Sunday and they drove like madmen to the northern city on roads which were basic, by twenty-first century standards. Pat Rennie reports that, for the record, Ted was the victor by two minutes.[52]

Albert's niece, Ann Connor, the daughter of Eric, recalls tales of her father and uncle skating down Macquarie Street among the vehicular traffic, again for a dare or a bet. She also tells of her father as the practical joker of the family, with Albert sometimes on the receiving end. These memoirs of her father usually have Albert as the serious one, the hardest worker, driven and impatient, which seems to fit nicely with the image of his later life.[53]

It is only natural that Pat Rennie would remember her father through rose-tinted glasses. She recalls a loving family man, who would come home for lunch each day at their New Town home rather than remain all day and night in the political hothouse. But when pressed she

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[49] *Ibid.*
[50] Examiner, 12 June 1939, p. 7.
[51] Pat Rennie interview, 2 November 2014.
[52] *Ibid*
[53] Interview with Ann Connor, 18 September 2014.

recalled her father's frustration and impatience with certain bureaucrats. A particular source of irritation was Edward Parkes, head of the Premier's Department, who was solid, careful and conservative. Ogilvie would rant that he was too slow to act and they appear to have been an odd couple.[54] The Premier wanted action and quick decision making, which was evident from his formative years. Parkes dressed conservatively and his political masters found him 'painstaking and pleasant, serious minded and respected by his peers and a model public servant of the old school'.[55]

Ogilvie's reputation as a brilliant young defence lawyer was quickly won and richly deserved. In almost every edition of the *Mercury* during his career he is reported as defending an array of accused, who ranged from alleged petty thieves to paedophiles, swindlers or murderers. Ogilvie established a reputation for clever persuasion of juries. In September 1919 Ogilvie defended a carter, accused of stealing coal from his employer. The value of the coal was only nine shillings, but it can be assumed that it was a regular occurrence. Ogilvie managed to get his client off with a three months suspended sentence.[56] His work for the unions was regular and he appeared for the Australasian Meat Industries and Employees Union in a case against a member refusing to pay his dues, dating back more than two years.[57] In 1930 he defended a man alleged to have shot at an elderly man during a confrontation. Ogilvie's powers of persuasion, on this occasion, were not so convincing, despite Ogilvie's suggestion of it being an accident.[58]

Ogilvie was not always the champion of the downtrodden and appeared for the defendant in a case where a worker sued for three pounds in unpaid wages, but Ogilvie was able to convince the Court of Requests Commissioner the money had been paid.[59] In a more serious case of alleged child molestation Ogilvie put the six-year-old in the witness box for cross-examination and was reported to have put the detective in the case under extreme pressure, suggesting he had not followed proper procedures, resulting in the policeman, according to the reporter, having cause to 'perspire freely.'[60] It could be assumed that Ogilvie had a better rapport with the criminal classes, along with the working class, because of his origins, but solicitors of the Establishment class also worked with those accused of petty, or

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[54] Pat Rennie interview, 2 November 2014.
[55] D. Bennet, 'Parkes, Edward (1890-1953)', ADB Vol. 15, Melbourne, 2000, p. 68.
[56] *Mercury*, 25 September 1919, p. 6.
[57] *Mercury*, 25 April 1919, p. 7.
[58] *Mercury*, 13 April 1930, p. 8
[59] *Examiner*, 2 September 1919, p. 4.
[60] *Mercury*, 30 August 1923, p. 4

more serious crime. His aggressive stance, on behalf of clients, is evident and is mirrored in his burgeoning political life.

Ogilvie was engaged in what was regarded as the then criminal trial of the century in 1921. The crime scene was the normally sleepy hamlet of North Motton in Tasmania's north-west and the horrible crime rocked, and divided, both that rural community and much further afield. Chrissie Venn, a 13-year-old girl, was the victim. She was raped and murdered and the investigations coincided with much gossip and finger pointing in the local community. George King, a young married man with a small child, was charged with the crime, after investigations by an incompetent and possibly biased police officer. King was a former police officer and there may have been some animosity on the part of the investigating officer, Fred Harmon. Despite another man being closer to the scene of the crime, King was charged. The main damning evidence concerned multiple scratches to King's face and arms. He claimed the scratches came from wounds acquired when cutting bracken. He also had a scratch delivered by his young daughter when she joined them playfully in bed as King and his wife jousted for the first kiss of the day from the little girl. Pugnacious and confident as ever, Ogilvie railed on one of the chief witnesses, a young illiterate labourer named Chic Purton. Ogilvie judged his evidence as 'contradictory, questionable and suspicious'. Ogilvie declared he had no doubt Purton, not King, should be standing in the dock. Ogilvie pointed to the fact that Purton gave differing times and confused evidence. In summing up, Ogilvie said the Crown's case about the scratches had been 'absolutely battered to pieces.' Ogilvie's eyes were fixed on Purton as he asked penetratingly: 'Who was the most likely person to commit such a crime – a married man with an attractive wife or a young man of the locality?'[61] Ogilvie persuaded the jury, although it took six hours to reach a verdict. The verdict was greeted with cheers in the court. It was a triumph for the future premier, although nothing good came of it for King, who had spent 157 days in prison. His home had been broken up and his wife was hospitalised with a mental collapse. Harmon, the policeman who charged King, was later dismissed from the police force for his part in bringing King to trial.[62]

Convict origin has been a burning question in the lives of nineteenth and twentieth-century Tasmanians. Whether it was a factor in the development of young Ogilvie's legal and political career is almost impossible to gauge. The descendants of convicts excelled in many fields and the large percentage of those with convict heritage, either acknowledged or not, may

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[61] L. and N. Smith, *Suffer Little Children*, Ulverstone, 2000, pp. 141, 176-7.
[62] Nicholas Shakespeare, *In Tasmania*, Sydney, 2004, pp. 271-9.

have provided a Biblical idea of those without sin casting the first stone. Alison Alexander, who has studied this issue comprehensively, writes that people may have denied a convict past existed in public, but in private there has been a strong undercurrent of sympathy with convicts – as long as no one was identified as a descendant, the past was kept separate from the present.[63] The sympathy is understandable. About three quarters of the population in the 1850s were convicts or the families of convicts. By 1880, about 86 percent of Tasmanians were native born. Convict descendants were prominent in sport, the arts, the law and parliament. Among those prominent in politics were early premiers Thomas Reibey and William Propsting, long before Albert Ogilvie was dreaming of high office. It is unlikely that convict heritage was ever thrown at Ogilvie in open debate. Even privately, playing the convict descendant card, would have been a foolish ploy, given that many convict descendants moved to the Right of politics or achieved honour in the military and other 'respectable' professions. Despite this, an element of shame and denial persisted in the generations of the early twentieth century.[64]

I suspect that the driving forces in Albert Ogilvie, which pushed him to the left of politics and to become a thorn in the side of the Establishment, had little to do with convict heritage. A telling statement from Ogilvie to an elector during his rise to political success demonstrates this well: 'as a solicitor, I represent all who are unfinancial, and in trouble, not the money-lending institutions'.[65] This quote is pertinent to Ogilvie's attitude on financial matters and where he saw himself as champion of the workers or in pleading a case for Tasmania when a member of the Lyons Government in 1926. In the following chapters I hope to demonstrate other factors that played such a telling role in the spectacular career of Albert Ogilvie and influenced him to remain a thorn in the flesh of the Tasmanian Establishment

[63] Alison Alexander, *Tasmania's Convicts: How Felons built a free Society*, Crows Nest, 2010, p. 208.
[64] Alexander, *Tasmania's Convicts*, pp. 258-9.
[65] Michael Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 28.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LYONS VERSUS OGILVIE

Australian politics has been riddled with infighting and colourful disputes over leadership during the past century. It is often cynically remarked that it is easier to deal with enemies in the opposing political party than those on your own side. There are notable examples ranging from rivalries as recent as Hawke-Keating, Rudd-Gillard or Abbott-Turnbull. The struggle between the Tasmanian political giants Joseph Lyons and Albert Ogilvie set the scene for many similar battles that followed. It had everything a writer of political drama could wish for. The popular older man, seemingly gentle-natured, opposed to the brilliant young upstart, eager to replace his leader and impatient and tenacious about the way to do so. Michael Roe suggests that understanding the relationship and the causes of the animosity are almost impossible to contemplate, let alone solve. The relationship during the period when Lyons was the United Australia Party Prime Minister and Ogilvie was Tasmanian Labor Premier is typical. According to Roe, the Ogilvie-Lyons relationship of this time demands analysis by a genius.[1] Despite their differences, there are similarities, not the least of which was the emergence of two controversial figures in a small island state and the coincidence that both died in office, within months of one another. To best understand the rivalry between the two men, and how that animosity developed and then increased, requires close examination of the background and career of Lyons.

The story must begin with a potted biography on the life of Lyons. Left-leaning historians have tended to dismiss him as a 'Labor rat' deserting the party. Kate White, in her biography on Joe and Enid Lyons explains that, for those steeped in Labor tradition, to publicly criticise and then leave the party is to 'rat on it'. [2] Others closer to the family have offered their own versions, but they are probably too close to the subject matter. A biography by Brendan Lyons, son of Joe, attempts a balanced appraisal, but it is difficult to imagine familial loyalty being absent.[3] And there is the long love affair and marriage between Lyons and his wife Enid, mother of 12, the first female member of the Federal Parliament and often regarded as a more intellectual and politically-savvy politician than Joe. The lifelong love affair between Enid and

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[1] Michael Roe, A. G Ogilvie and the Blend of Van Diemen's Land with Tasmania,' Bulletin of the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2 1986, pp. 39-59. 1986, p. 50.

[2] K. White, *A Political Love Story: Joe and Enid Lyons*, Ringwood, 1987, p. 134.

[3] Brendan Lyons, *They loved him to Death: Australian Prime Minister Joe Lyons,* Launceston, 2008.

Joe reads like a romantic novel. White describes a marriage proposal on the beach at Cooee, in Tasmania's north-west, as romantic and a trifle dangerous. Lyons was then the Tasmanian Minister of Education and Enid a mere 17 years old and a junior teacher. Joe was twice her age and eager to marry and stamp out any thoughts of impropriety in the relationship.[4] Their marriage was the most stable thing in Joe Lyons' long career, which included the premiership of Tasmania and prime ministership of Australia, heading two separate parties.

Those who may have been shocked at Lyons' later zig-zagging political career should look back to events well before his rise to national fame. To his credit, Lyons attempted genuine bipartisanship and often succeeded. Lyons was seen to be happiest when working co-operatively with the opposition. He told a *Melbourne Herald* reporter that the Nationals leader J. C. McPhee was his greatest friend and that there was no enmity between the government and opposition: 'We work in co-operation for the good of the country, and we consult on all contentious measures that will advance Tasmania's interests.'[5] White writes that Lyons' break with the Labor Party in 1930-31 is more understandable against this backdrop of his performance as Tasmanian Premier in the mid-1920s. The unions were very wary of such close co-operation.[6] They may have been wise to show such caution. Those who study the life of Joe Lyons would be well advised to harbour such doubts about his journeying from left to right. Was he a genuinely decent man, trying to appease, and please, the bulk of the people? Or was he the ultimate chameleon, going where it appeared safe and becoming the perennial fence-sitter extraordinaire?

Lyons' early life and background offers many clues to his changing stance on so many issues. Family circumstances may have contributed to his earlier commitment to a mild form of socialism. He was born at Stanley on 15 September 1879 and, like Ogilvie, died in office in 1939. At the age of nine Joe was forced to work as a farm labourer, errand boy and printer's devil in Ulverstone.[7] This was caused by his father gambling away all they had on the 1887 Melbourne Cup. Some accounts of this drama sound too fanciful. It is more likely he gradually gambled away the family wealth, rather than during three minutes of gross and eccentric speculation at Flemington Racecourse.

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[4] White, *A Political Love Story*, pp.1-3.
[5] White, *A Political Love Story*, p. 104.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Lyons, *They loved him to Death*, p.9.

The telling of this story through the years is a warning to historians of any kind but especially for those dabbling in oral history. A popular version of the story is that Joe's father, Michael, dreamed the winner of the 1884 Melbourne Cup, a famous horse called Malua. The next year Michael Lyons had a similar dream that Trenton would win the Cup. He is alleged to have bet all his money on Trenton and stood to win £15,000. He even offered the jockey £500 as a winning incentive. According to biographer Brendan Lyons, Michael claims to have seen, from his vantage point along the rails, the jockey pull Trenton from the lead and lose by a head. Michael told this tale to many people and it must be one of the most vivid of hard luck stories ever offered up. Gamblers often have a difficult relationship with the truth.[8] Brendan Lyons writes that each time the story was told the details changed. Some said it was 1885, others said it was 1886. Some reports said Trenton ran second and third in various years. No one telling this story through the years, including journalists, bothered to check the official records. The truth is that Trenton ran third in 1885 and second in 1886.[9] Regardless of the details, it is clear that life for the Lyons family became extremely difficult and that gambling had ruined the family fortunes.

Young Joe was saved from the drudgery of child labour by two aunts, Misses Mary and Letitia Carroll, who supported his return to school at the age of twelve.[10] He gained a job as monitor, then a junior teacher at small country schools. He took up debating and developed quickly as a platform speaker. He joined the Workers Political League, the forerunner of the Australian Labor Party. He was warned against engaging in politics by the Education Department and had many clashes with the department, becoming a critic of the education system. He resigned in 1909 to contest the State seat of Wilmot for the Labor Party. According to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Lyons campaigned vigorously and was horsewhipped by a local landowner he had criticised. Lyons was awarded damages and believed that the incident helped him win the election.[11] This is not factually correct and both the date and the circumstances are confused. The 'horsewhipping' occurred during the 1912 campaign. Reports about the incident, on 25 March 1912 at the Dunorlan Hall, appear to have been greatly exaggerated and contradicted by word of mouth and in newspapers, necessitating Lyons writing to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* fifteen days later to explain the true details.

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[8] Lyons, *They loved him to Death*, p. 9.
[9] Lyons, *They loved him to Death*, p.11.
[10] David S. Bird, *J. A. Lyons – The Tame Tasmanian: Appeasement and Rearmament in Australia, 1932-39*, North Melbourne, 2008, p. 11.
[11] P. R. Hart and C. J. Lloyd, Lyons, Joseph Aloysius (Joe), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 10, (Melbourne), 1986, p.1.

Lyons explained that his potential assailant, Will von Bibra, did not have the opportunity to whip him: 'He did not succeed in striking me with his whip, because, as I could not strike a man seventy years of age, I merely closed with him, and threw his arms up, and the whip was taken from him.' Lyons also described as a figment of his wonderful imagination, a reporter's account of Lyons being thrown to the floor.[12] A subsequent court case found that von Bibra did create a disturbance, entered the hall and attempted to assault the said J. A. Lyons. He was fined a total of two pounds, ten shillings plus various costs, totalling just over seven pounds.[13]

Brendan Lyons agrees that the Dunorlan incident certainly did no harm to his father's public acceptance. He retained his seat and topped the poll a few weeks later. In a colourful aside to the case, von Bibra was reported to have said outside the court that he would 'gladly pay another five pounds if you let me hit him again.' Brendan Lyons and members of the von Bibra family have searched diligently for some means of authenticating that quote as it adds a good finishing touch to the story. The families agree that the aftermath and embellishment of the story was 'one of those family myths that develop over time.'[14]

The retelling of this incident helps portray the young Joe as a peace-loving man, who would never dare respond with violence to an older opponent. Long before then hints emerge that, despite a rising radicalism, the young teacher and potential politician had a soft and loving nature. Lyons' biographer Anne Henderson has reproduced, compliments of the Lyons family, Joe's thoughts in a simple parlour game. The players were asked to write down their favourite virtues, colours, poets, ideas of happiness, along with ideas of misery and favourite occupation. Joe, then 26, listed his favourite virtue as honesty. Happiness was a clear conscience and his idea of misery was being unpopular.[15] In polite society of the time, Joe would hardly have listed too many negatives. What does it say about the inner man? Probably nothing. This game, played in mixed company, would have produced little of a controversial nature. The only significant answer is, for Joe, misery was being unpopular. His career was devoted to being, and staying, popular. Mythology plays an important part in the image of Joe Lyons. Epithets such as 'Honest Joe' abound and he managed to create an image of the good-natured deliverer of home spun philosophy, happy in the company of his political adversaries, and opposed to outward displays of conflict. It was an image not unlike Will Rogers or later Ronald Reagan,

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[12] *Daily Telegraph*, 30 March 1912, p. 7.
[13] *Examiner*, 20 April 1912, p.8.
[14] Lyons, *They Loved him to* Death, pp. 41-45.
[15] Anne Henderson, *Joseph Lyons: The People's Prime Minister*, Sydney, 2011, pp. 37-8.

across the Pacific. Perhaps it was a real or acquired look in the days before spin doctors and media advisers. What is not at dispute is the gradual, and then accelerated, rise to political stardom of Lyons.

The career of the young radical was now firmly on its way. And what a journey it was to be. Lyons described himself as a socialist during the years 1909 to 1922. There can be no dispute, or misunderstanding about his commitment to socialism and the causes of the left at that time. The best example of Lyons' then radical stance came in 1921 in a speech made on the Hobart Domain.

> The time has now arrived when a momentous decision must now be reached, and reached quickly. Whether the old world of affairs would prevail in the future as in the past, or whether the Labor Party would have to devise a new policy for the complete emancipation of the workers. . . . the capitalistic system has failed and the world is on the threshold of a new social order. . . . hitherto the Labor Party has attempted to correct the evils of a rotten system, now they must seek to remove the rotten system itself for it is clear that nothing else will suffice. New methods must be devised for a new day.[16]

The *Mercury* blasted Lyons as the 'leader of the Bolsheviks and Sinn Fein wing of the Labor Party in Tasmania.'[17] This was only a few years after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the 1916 Easter Rebellion in Ireland. Michael Denholm argues that the Labor Party was more radical than it had ever been before and has ever been since.[18] These were heady days for young radicals in conservative Tasmania. An interesting appraisal from afar about the state of Australian politics came a few years earlier when Vladimir Lenin, knee-deep in his Russian Revolution, in 1913, had declared of Australian politics that 'the ALP is a liberal bourgeois party and the Liberals are really Conservatives.'[19] It is a view which could be offered a century later. Despite earlier blasts, Lyons was to enjoy a better relationship with the newspapers, even the *Mercury*, than Ogilvie, which is not saying much.

These were interesting and complicated times, but it is difficult to imagine a more extensive move to the right than that of Lyons. Many people in their young political life develop changes in attitude. It has often been remarked that yesterday's socialist becomes tomorrow's

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[16] *World*, 14 March 1921, p. 4.
[17] *Mercury*, 19 March 1921, p.4.
[18] Michael Denholm, A Study in Achievement: The Lyons Tasmanian Labor Government: 1923-28, and the Career of Joseph Lyons, 1973, p.8. Unpublished BA Hons thesis, University of Tasmania.
[19] R. N. Ebbels, *The Australian Labor Movement 1850-1907,* Sydney, 1960, p. 243.

conservative. Joe Lyons seems unique in that he managed to garner respect and win three national elections, despite being branded a Labor rat by his detractors in the party and a view expressed by some that he stood for nothing in particular during the middle to later years of his political career. Lyons was State Premier for five years and Prime Minister for seven years. His admirers, quite rightly, point to a most successful political career without equal. He could not be more different than Albert Ogilvie. He hovered like a shadow over the younger man. Their lives were inevitably connected, for good and bad.

As a means of showing the ever-changing and difficult relationship between the two men over nearly two decades, consider that Ogilvie was the man chosen by Lyons to present the Case for Tasmania in 1926. This was a demand that the Federal Government provide Tasmania with a better deal in the distribution of finances. Eight years later the newly-elected Premier Ogilvie was strident in his criticism of the federal government, under Lyons' leadership, on the issue of Tasmania's treatment. Ogilvie wrote to a New South Wales correspondent that 'on the question of justice to Tasmania, Joe Lyons will wish I was never born'.[20]

When the brilliant young lawyer Albert Ogilvie won election to the Tasmanian Parliament in 1919 there were already hints that the Lyons-Ogilvie relationship would be a rocky one. Not for Ogilvie the concept of conciliation and co-operation with your enemies. Among the few things they had in common was a Catholic background and there were publicans in both families. But there were no convicts in the Lyons heritage and a vast difference in the school teaching career of Lyons and legal career of Ogilvie. Both men married when in their thirties. Ogilvie was wed to a mature woman, Dorothy Mabel Hines, who was three years his senior. Lyons married a 17-year-old, Enid Burnell, who was to prove fertile and influential in the changes which took place in the character of Lyons over his incredible career and the lurch from the left to right. It is a fair assumption that the changes in the thinking of Joe Lyons could be sheeted home to a four-letter word – Enid. While biographers, family or not, concede that Enid was at least the intellectual equal of Joe, maybe his superior, her influence on his thinking and decision making was immense. Enid induced Joe to cancel his subscription to the *Australian Worker*, the official Labor publication, declaring it to be too

[20] Michael Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*: *World-wise Tasmanians,* Hobart, 2008, p. 24.

biased, intolerant and bitter.[21] Love seems to have taken Lyons a long way from the path of Labor's true believers and far from the man he had once been in younger, more radical days.

Lyons became Premier in October 1922 when Ogilvie was just 32 and had been in the Parliament for four years, but was a widely accomplished lawyer. Lyons appointed him Attorney-General, among other portfolios he held. We will never know if Lyons appointed Ogilvie to make the Case for Tasmania in 1926 because he was the best man for the job or to keep him busy and not sharpening the knives to stab the Premier in the back. No historian has suggested it in so many words.[22] What is certain is that Ogilvie's passion and love of his home state were foremost in his mind when presenting the Case for Tasmania. Ogilvie was joined by fellow lawyer and Legislative Councillor Tasman Shields to prepare the Case. It may have been the last act of willing co-operation Ogilvie was to have with the Upper House.

The submission was made to Sir Nicholas Lockyer, special representative of the Commonwealth Government, who was appointed to inquire into the financial position of Tasmania.[23] By today's standards the amount sought in financial assistance was tiny. But it was highly necessary to keep Tasmania even close to being afloat. Ogilvie, at his pugnacious best, made the point that since federation Tasmania had lost 38,000 men and women of the type best able to develop the resources of the state and to help bear the burden of taxation. Many industries had closed down and many were languishing. Ogilvie even mentioned the word secession, something he was to threaten later in his own premiership: 'The ugly word secession has been heard in many places, even in our Parliament; and we put it to you, in plain language, that unless the state receives substantial financial assistance from the Commonwealth Parliament it cannot continue to function as a self-governing state of the union.'[24] Ogilvie at his most aggressive best, said previous grants of £90,000 per year were inadequate and merely 'repaid the state what it should have received previously and rightly considered was not assistance at all.' He added that, had Tasmania been an underdeveloped state, somewhat in the position of the Northern Territory, there is no doubt that the Commonwealth Government

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[21] Lloyd Robson, updated by Michael Roe, *A Short History of Tasmania*, Melbourne, 1997, p. 96.

[22] This may seem a trifle facetious on my part. There appears to be no evidence that Lyons chose Ogilvie for this task to keep him at arm's length from a leadership challenge. But the satirists and political observers had little doubt about the ambitions of the younger man.

[23] Albert Ogilvie, 'The Case for Tasmania.' *Presented to Sir Nicholas Lockyer, special representative of the Commonwealth Government, appointed to enquire into the financial position of Tasmania*, Hobart, 10 February 1926, p.2

[24] Albert Ogilvie, 'The Case for Tasmania', p.2.

would have been very willing to assist towards the development proper to this part of the Commonwealth. Ogilvie said that the minimum amount required per annum for the next decade was £415,000 to meet its annual liabilities and expenditure plus an amount of £130,000 in reduced taxation to place the state in a position to recover its productive power. The submission to Lockyer was partly successful, but fell short of Tasmanian expectations. Tasmania was granted £378,000 over three years.[25]

Threats of secession by Ogilvie were no flash in the pan. Nine years later and soon after his 1934 election victory, Ogilvie was again talking of secession. The new Premier declared that if Tasmania did not get justice by any other means, a referendum for secession would be introduced. 'We are on the dole today,' said Ogilvie. 'We won't stand for it. We want a Federal Government that will say, what are your wrongs? Assert your rights and we shall heed them.'[26] Ogilvie was reported in the *Riverine Herald*, published in faraway Echuca and Moama and was clearly making media waves interstate. He was railing against a Federal Government led by Lyons: "I believe in an Australian nation. I want to help save the Federation from cracking up, but there is no reason why this community should be bled white. Although I would hate to have secession, I shall resort to it, without the slightest hesitation.'[27] In the same article Ogilvie touched on a theme he was to champion in the years before his death and which will be the subject of a later chapter in this thesis. He had taken the Tourism portfolio under his wing, and was adamant that Tasmania's small size need not be a deterrent to excellence. "Tasmania can be another Switzerland,' he insisted.[28]

Until 1927 the relationship between Lyons and Ogilvie was rocky, but played out mostly in private. Ogilvie and Lyons were not reported as publicly in a bitter struggle. But perceptions of the politically aware were that the younger man was clearly ambitious and had eyes for the top job. Sometimes the cartoonists and satirists are able to say what the official record does not. In early 1927 Students at the University, in a revue, summed up the situation aptly with words to the tune of the music hall favourite *Burlington Bertie,* which began:

I'm Albert George O,

I'm a Bolshie you know,

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[25] W. A. Townsley, *Tasmania: From Colony to Statehood 1803-1945*, Hobart, 1992, pp. 311-13.
[26] *Riverine Herald*, 23 June 1934, p.2.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*

For I find that it pays in the end;

When I'm out with the boys,

I'm a hell of a noise,

Always ready to go on the bend.

For Lyons is my boss,

But I'm ready to toss,

Off his shackles someday, and I'll be my own leader;

I'm Al-bert, you can bet your shirt,

Someday I'll be Premier too.

The song ends with:

Though the folk may say fudge,

I'll be someday a judge,

And Lord Albert George Ogilvie O.[29]

Although seemingly frivolous, it is probably close to the mark on political aspiration, even legal ambitions. But the 'Lord Albert' tag was probably harder to imagine. Ogilvie had consistently espoused such radical views as to place himself well away from monarchic trappings or imperial honours.

Coping with the satirists was easy compared with what was soon to follow. A series of bombshells descended on Ogilvie later in 1927 that would have wrecked the career of a lesser man and seemed certain to do so in his case. There had been persistent rumours of an improper relationship between the Public Trust Office, which came within the Attorney General's portfolio, held by Ogilvie, and his own law firm, in partnership with T. A. Okines. Different slants on what followed abound. One version is that the Parliament rejected the need for a Royal Commission, but Lyons persisted to appoint one under Judge Harold Crisp.[30] Lyons' biographer Anne Henderson writes that Lyons was forced to call the Royal Commission,

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[29] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha, pp. 8-9.* Printed program, photocopied.
[30] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, pp. 9-10.

seeming to have no option under the tradition of ministerial responsibility and in keeping with his image of 'Honest Joe' Lyons.[31] On 13 September Ogilvie gave evidence, along with several others, providing the *Mercury* with opportunities for banner headlines such as 'Attorney-General Examined' and 'What the Facts Disclosed.'[32] Ogilvie was ready for a fight, as usual, and began his evidence by denying any guilt in the matter. 'I want to make it perfectly clear at the outset that at no time, nor in any way, was I concerned in this transaction of the firm, nor did I know of it until it was mentioned by Mr Piggott [J. P. Piggott of the Nationals] on the floor of the House.'[33] The following two days Okines gave evidence, accepting all blame in his firm for having shown a 'certain amount of laxity' The Commission was to resume on 20 September but Okines was found dead that morning. A Coronial inquiry found suicide the cause. It was said that he had been greatly distressed by politicians attacking him in pursuit of their anti-Ogilvie tactics.[34]

The *Mercury* edition the next day told of the tragic circumstances in the most descriptive detail, that a clerk in the employ of the firm had discovered the gruesome scene after shots were heard at 9.45am. 'The top of his head was blown off', screamed the newspaper, and he was lying in a pool of blood. A journalist was able to gain access to a letter written before his death to Mr C. Kennedy, a lifelong friend of Okines. Okines wrote that, since being in the witness box, he lost his self-control due to continued overwork and staleness. Okines feared he was developing serious mental strain and that he needed 'a long rest'[35] No mention of gambling has been made in this sorry affair, but it seems that both Okines and Ogilvie were keen racegoers as far back as the early 1920s. An interstate report of a trotting meeting at Epping, New South Wales, in 1924, is interesting. The report describes Messrs Ogilvie and Okines as 'visiting sportsmen'. It tells that Ogilvie was in Sydney last December (1923) and at that time was the author of a bill to legalise on and off course betting in Tasmania and was 'optimistic about its adoption, but much to Mr Ogilvie's surprise the measure did not get passed.'[36] Bookmakers had been banned from Tasmanian racecourses since 1897 and it was not until 1933 that offcourse betting was allowed, but not on race days. There had been hot

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[31] Henderson, *Joseph Lyons*, pp. 178-9.
[32] *Mercury*, 14 September, 1927, pp.7, 9.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 10.
[35] *Mercury*, 21 September 1927, p. 6.
[36] *Sydney Sportsman*, 2 January 1924, p. 4.

debate about the issue right through the 1920s.[37] As Attorney-General, Ogilvie would have hoped for a win in the matter, but it was voted down by the Legislative Council.

Crisp reported early in October, finding that Okines was primarily at fault, but rebuked Ogilvie for having misled the Commission about the firm's inability to meet interest payments. Lyons responded to the findings by dumping Ogilvie from Cabinet. Once again, it is hard to get a balanced position on whether Lyons acted appropriately in sacking Ogilvie. The Westminster tradition of standing down when impropriety is alleged must have been in Lyons' mind. It could have been the chance Lyons was waiting for – to rid himself of his only threat to leadership. Even in his darkest hour, when forced to resign as Attorney-General, Ogilvie was prodding at Lyons. In his official letter of resignation Ogilvie conceded he had to leave the Ministry: 'It is impossible for me immediately to obtain the opinion of the electors of Franklin, but I will give them an opportunity to express their opinion by submitting myself as a candidate at the general election to be held next year.'[38] Ogilvie was beaten, but not bowed, even in the face of misfortune which should have ended his career. What is certain is that the relationship with Lyons was never mended until a reconciliation of sorts in 1939, the year both men died. Enid Lyons regularly stated that the need to ask Ogilvie to stand down caused her husband 'tremendous grief'. She blamed Ogilvie's hostility to Lyons in the years which followed to this one event.[39]

Justice Crisp, who ran the Royal Commission into the affairs of Ogilvie and Okines, was working his way up the ladder to almost join Lyons as Ogilvie's most bitter opponent. Lyons went to the polls on 30 May 1928 and Ogilvie was in typically good form. He lambasted Crisp's findings as Royal Commissioner and painted himself as the big loser in that affair, incurring a debt of £20,000 from his partner's wrongs. The attacks led to Ogilvie being charged with contempt. A Full Court hearing resulted in a guilty verdict for Ogilvie, but his only punishment was to pay court costs. Ogilvie was quickly becoming the radical opponent of almost everyone in the legal Establishment. But even worse was to come. The Southern Law Society sought to have him debarred from practice, alleging a wide range of misbehaviour. Justice Crisp, almost predictably, found for the Society, but his fellows disagreed.[40] The case

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[37] *Australian Gambling Comparative History and Analysis*, prepared by the Australian Institute for Gambling Research, University of Western Sydney, Sydney, 1999, pp. 74-6.
[38] *Mercury*, 13 October 1927, p. 9.
[39] Henderson, *Joseph Lyons*, p. 180.
[40] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 10.

gained significance even outside Tasmania. The Adelaide *Advertiser* reported that Chief Justice, (Sir Herbert Nicholls) and Acting Judge Hall agreed that the application should be discharged, but that Mr Justice Crisp strongly dissented, pressing the opinion that the Law Society's charges had been sustained.[41] Ogilvie was clearly painted as a bad boy of the legal fraternity, but he must have enjoyed a different image with the public. A fund was established to help meet his costs and it raised several hundred pounds, with many donations coming from every day folk.[42] It was under this scenario that the 1928 state election, in the Franklin electorate, was fought.

Six years later, when Ogilvie was newly in office, relations with the Southern Law Society may still have been frosty. Protocol probably demanded that the Premier be invited to a social function on 11 July 1934, which was a reunion dinner of legal practitioners. The invitation was sent a week before the event, couched in flowery language. It was signed by the Society's secretary, P. Bradford, which ended with the words: 'I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant.'[43] Ogilvie did not reply until the day of the dinner, writing that he regretted not being able to attend. Ogilvie cited the pressure of Ministerial duties. His response was quite blunt. It contained none of the usual niceties of such communications. The significance of this exchange could be exaggerated by the author of this thesis, but given the rancour which existed just a few years earlier, it is interesting.[44]

It could be something in the Australian psyche which favours a roguish Ned Kelly or Robin Hood figure which was at play on election day. The results were astounding for a man dumped from the Cabinet and fighting off opponents on all fronts. The election results for Franklin showed that the 'sacked' Attorney-General remained something of a working-class hero, certainly for Labor voters. On election night, with approximately 70 per cent of the vote counted in Franklin, Ogilvie had topped the poll with 4156 votes. This was a quarter of the total Franklin vote. The Nationals' J. P. Piggott, whose original accusations about the dealings of Okines and Ogilvie had led to the Royal Commission, led his party with 2396. One of Ogilvie's most rabid critics, the *Mercury*, conceded it was an astonishing vote, which it said had been anticipated as a 'sympathy vote'. The newspaper's analysis also pointed out, without

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[41] *Adelaide Advertiser* 28 April 1928, p. 15.
[42] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p.10.
[43] Southern Law Society to Ogilvie, 4 July 1934, PD8/5, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.
[44] Ogilvie to Southern Law Society, 11 July 1934, PD8/5, TAHO.

comment that the Government Whip, Ben Watkins, warmly enclosed in the folds of the Lyons camp, could manage but 1098 votes in taking sixth place.[45]

Some colourful writing also appeared in the election wrap up, which shows that Ogilvie had lost none of his popularity, despite what the newspaper may have wanted. The *Mercury* building was then opposite the Town Hall, in Macquarie Street, and was a hub of political activity and excitement on election nights. Under a heading 'Mr Ogilvie Chaired' the newspaper swallowed its disappointment by reporting:

> The sensation of the evening came about 11.45, when there was a shout from hundreds of throats, and the figure of a man was seen on the crest of a wave of humanity which rolled across the street to the pavement outside the *Mercury* office. It was Mr A. G. Ogilvie, K. C., borne shoulder-high by cheering followers, inspired by the figures which followed his name on the list. They carried him across the street and back to the Town Hall steps amid the plaudits of the multitude and from the steps Mr Ogilvie made a speech.[46]

This was followed by the usual flowery thanks and gratitude from successful politicians, but Ogilvie could not resist the temptation for a barb towards the newspaper: 'Those figures on that board are my answer to that paper opposite.' The reporter and his editor were good enough to concede that Ogilvie had triumphed despite their urgings, something which was to become typical in the years that followed. A little more of the report captured the mood of the gathering:

> Mr Ogilvie was followed onto the rostrum by other speakers, one of whom was very amusing, interrupting his bursts of eloquence to lubricate his vocal organs from a brown bottle. This gentleman was understood to say that if a certain candidate were an office boy in Mr Ogilvie's office, he would not be allowed to empty the waste paper basket.[47]

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[45] *Mercury,* 31 May 1928, p. 9.
[46] *Mercury,* 31 May 1928, p.10.
[47] *Ibid.*

The report also mentioned that after the last trams had carried their human cargo home many Ogilvie supporters braved the chill night air well past midnight in celebration of his success.[48] It was a rare gesture of reportage by the *Mercury*, which had little love for Ogilvie.

Media taking sides in elections was nothing new and has continued to this day. But the relationship between Ogilvie and Tasmania's press is a special case and will be examined more closely in a later chapter. It is worth noting the style of pre-election coverage in 1919 when Ogilvie made his debut as a young parliamentarian. Under a heading of 'How to Vote', the newspaper explained to its readers the necessity to number the boxes from 1 to 2 and so on. It listed the candidates in each electorate in alphabetical order, as on the ballot paper. It also included the helpful advice that Nationalist candidates are in black, bold letters. Ogilvie's name, along with other Labor candidates, was relegated to a low spot and in pale lettering. The newspaper was taking no chances on informing the electorate about what to do.[49]

The election results of 1928 proved to be a personal triumph for both Lyons and Ogilvie, who were the only candidates of either party to top the 4000 mark. But the party lost the election and that served to create even more division and animosity between the two political heavyweights. According to Richard Davis, critics of the Lyons Government claimed before the election that 'he [Lyons] was too busy trying to conciliate its [Labor's] enemies to bother much about its old friends.' Nationalist tactics distinguished between the eminently satisfactory Lyons, welcome to form or join a coalition with his opponents, and the terrifying Labor machine, manned by people like the disreputable Ogilvie, at his back.[50]

The seeds were sown at that time for what was to follow in Lyons' career. It became an inevitable course of leaving Tasmanian state politics and eventually switching parties in the most dramatic of changes imaginable. Many politicians have changed, or amended, their political hue through the years. But none has been as high profile as that which happened with Lyons. But before Lyons could take the plunge to Canberra and the highest office in the land he had a difficult period at home, exacerbated by an ambitious and hostile opponent, snapping at his heels.

Lyons moved to federal politics in 1929, appearing to be very much the Labor man, ahead of his incredible shift to become leader of the United Australia Party and Prime Minister

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[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Mercury*, 26 May 1919, pp.5-6.
[50] Richard Davis, *Eighty Years' Labor: the ALP in Tasmania, 1903-1983*, Hobart, 1983, p.22.

within three years. Before his move to Canberra, Lyons took steps to hopefully see that Ogilvie's leadership aspirations would be thwarted. Lyons wanted Ben Watkins to be his successor. Watkins appears to have been cut from the Lyons' mould but lacked the political skills or the charisma of Lyons. Watkins was described as an archetypal good bloke, but one who had never achieved Cabinet rank, despite his loyalty and friendship with Lyons.[51] The battle for leadership of the State party was bitter and nasty, but Ogilvie scraped up sufficient support to win 9-7. Although a party stalwart, Watkins could not match Ogilvie in ability, but was seen as a compromise candidate on whom the former Attorney-General's numerous enemies could base their hopes.[52] Ogilvie had fulfilled his ambitions to lead the party, but the barren years between 1929 and his eventual rise to the premiership in 1934 were difficult and frustrating. It seemed that Ogilvie would never overcome the combined weight of the crumbling Labor Party around the nation, the regular battles with local newspapers and a powerful Legislative Council, not to mention the ingrained conservatism of the Tasmanian electorate.

A good example of how far apart Lyons and Ogilvie had moved came during a fiery Federal election in 1937 when Lyons was Prime Minister and Ogilvie was Tasmanian Premier. A rowdy crowd of 1500 gathered in Launceston's Albert Hall on 21 October to hear one of the final addresses of the campaign. A frustrated Lyons, responding to heckling from sections of the crowd, shouted that his opponents claimed to be great champions of free speech: 'You went to a meeting the other night to hear lies told about me and will not allow me to reply to them,' Lyons said: 'Mr Ogilvie says that I will not be the leader much longer. Six years ago they had the same fairy tale to tell the people. Three years went by, but they told the same story. I am still here and will continue to be the leader of the Federal Government.'[53] This was news his detractors did not want to hear and at least one vocal critic was ejected from the meeting, which was attended by seven police constables. Amid the uproar, Lyons responded to accusations from Ogilvie that the Federal Government had ignored the plight of the workers and that increased prosperity had not come to the masses. Lyons claimed his government had helped factories re-open, which increased employment by 200,000 nationwide and increased assistance to Tasmania for housing. Ogilvie, never one to cosy up to the monarchy and the Establishment, had criticised the Federal Government for spending £20,000 on a residence for

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[51] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 11.
[52] Davis, *Eighty Years' Labor*, p.24.
[53] *Examiner*, 22 October 1937, p.9.

the Governor-General while the masses struggled to find housing. Lyons defended the decision, saying the house was a very old building which had been lent by the New South Wales government.[54] Lyons described his critics, including Ogilvie, as getting 'right down in the gutter' by making coarse jokes about his family in relation to maternity bonuses.[55] 'We are improving the maternity bonus, and arouse sneers, jeers and coarse jokes,' Lyons retorted, 'we did it because we want to give some recognition to the mothers of this country.'[56] This encounter suggests that Lyons may have been feeling the pressure of his deteriorating health and the burden of office. Such jokes about the fertility of Joe and Enid Lyons and their religious persuasion would have been commonplace in the lighter side of the cut and thrust of politics.

Before leaving this chapter and the battle between Lyons and Ogilvie, it is interesting to compare and contrast the struggle Lyons would have later in his prime ministership with another brilliant, and ambitious young lawyer, eager to replace the older man and impatient to do so. Apart from those attributes, and raw ambition, there seems to be nothing in common between Ogilvie and Robert Gordon Menzies, except their legal background. They were far apart in their political views but shared the irritation of having to wait their turn to replace Lyons. To these traits one could add, in Menzies' case, a pomposity and arrogance verging on the unbelievable.

Menzies had been urged into the federal parliament with a promise of the Attorney-General's job. Just four months after joining the Australian Parliament, Menzies accompanied Lyons to London, as part of King George V's Silver Jubilee celebrations. Ogilvie, now Tasmanian Premier, also attended this celebration. Menzies praised the speech given by Lyons, describing it as 'admirable' and added that 'he is doing famously and I may be well content to be in the background while he does as well as he is now doing.'[57] Ogilvie grudgingly praised the speech and admitted Lyons' contribution had been the highlight of that particular gathering. Ogilvie had been critical of several British contributions and frustrated at the lack of action he came to associate with those then at the helm of the old empire.[58]

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[54] *Ibid.*

[55] These jibes would have been about the size of Lyons' own family of 11 surviving children, making them a major recipient of funding.

[56] *Examiner*, 22 October 1937, p.9

[57] White, *A Political Love Story, p.* 170.

[58] David S. Bird, *J. A. Lyons – The Tame Tasmanian: Appeasement and Rearmament in Australia,* North Melbourne, 2008, p. 103.

When Menzies moved from the Victorian to Federal Parliament, Victorian Premier Sir Stanley Argyle had said: 'Thank God we got rid of him. You're welcome to him.'[59] Menzies had a distaste for the Country Party and its leader Earle Page, which mirrored Menzies' attitude to Lyons. Don Whitington, regarded as doyen of the political journalists in Canberra at this time, who was known for his fair and unbiased reporting, described the last year of the Lyons-Page Government and farcical Cabinet meetings: 'Menzies criticised, obstructed, mischievously mocked and generally made merry. Lyons was frustrated and bewildered; the Country Party, butt of most of Menzies' barbed shafts, was furiously impotent. Only the Attorney-General [Menzies] emerged from Cabinet smiling.'[60] There could have been moments when Lyons must have pined for earlier days and considered that maybe his troubles with Ogilvie were mild by comparison.

By a somewhat perverse irony, death brought the warring duo of Lyons and Ogilvie together. They both died in 1939. Lyons was first to pass on 7 April. Ogilvie declared that there could be no politics in death. Ogilvie and John Curtin were among the pall-bearers at the Devonport funeral of Lyons. Ogilvie, true to his word of no politics in death, assured Enid Lyons that Labor would not contest the by-election for Joe's seat if Enid chose to nominate. She declined to nominate, although she was later to enter federal politics. Ogilvie died on 10 June. Among the mourners supporting his widow, Dorothy Ogilvie, was Enid Lyons.[61]

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[59] Lyons, *They Loved him to Death*, Tasmania, 2008, p. 223. Citing Lindsay Nance, *Prime Ministers of Australia*, London, 1989.

[60] Brian Costar, 'The Politics of Coalition' in *The Menzies Era: A Reappraisal of Government, Politics and Policy*, eds Scott Prasser, J. R. Nethercote and John Warhurst, Sydney, 1995, p. 93.

[61] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, pp. 236-9.

# CHAPTER THREE

## OGILVIE, THE MEDIA AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

This chapter displays the ways in which Ogilvie battled against the combined forces of an often hostile conservative press and the Establishment forces within the parliament. Despite antagonism from the Tasmanian dailies, it will be demonstrated that these confrontations did no harm to Ogilvie, at the ballot box or in public perceptions of his ability. From Ogilvie's standpoint the newspapers and the Legislative Council were his twin enemies. His struggle to abolish or reform the Council was often played out in the newspapers of the day, with Ogilvie appearing to thrive on the hostility between the Establishment and himself, with a conservative press as his enemy, while firmly the ally of the Council.

From a twenty-first century viewpoint, media bias and politics go hand in hand. The tabloid press may choose to vilify and treat a politician or party with disdain. But there are ways in which political leaders and candidates for office can get their message across, whether it be through other more friendly press, radio or television outlets or paid political advertising. A century ago actual and aspiring politicians had fewer ways to influence voters if a newspaper was not on side. For Albert Ogilvie it was a cross almost too great to bear. Ogilvie's relations with the newspapers were toxic, to say the least. Although his battles with the *Mercury* provided the most colourful and ribald exchanges, an editorial from the Launceston *Examiner* in 1930 provides a good example of what newspaper editors thought of Ogilvie. He was described as a fair example of the politician with a perpetual grievance and is always airing it: 'His bete noir is the press. He is exceedingly hard to please. Sometimes it is the publicity he gets which annoys him. At other times it is the publicity he doesn't get.'[1] The editorial referred to a meeting at the Albert Hall in Launceston when Ogilvie had complained that 'deliberate suppression' and 'misrepresentation' by a particular section of the Tasmanian press made it necessary for him and others to go before the people to let them know what was going on and how the Labor party viewed it.[2] This was to become a common theme with Ogilvie, who would

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[1] *Examiner,* 29 October 1930, p.6
[2] *Ibid.*

make speeches in political rallies or in the Parliament about how people would not get the facts, as he saw them, in the newspapers of the day.

Before closer examination of this theme, let us examine how the press of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century became what Ogilvie would consider the instruments of conservatism and the protectors and champions of the Establishment. It was not always so. The first owner of the *Mercury* was John Davies, the first of the family line of proprietors of the newspaper who controlled it for more than a century until it was swallowed up by the Murdoch group. John Davies came to Tasmania in 1834 with enough baggage to suggest 'respectability' was impossible. A Jew, transported convict and possessing a violent nature, Davies was convicted of fraud at the Middlesex Court in 1830, when he was a young man of 17. Davies also became part proprietor of Hobart's Theatre Royal, which was extensively reconstructed under his guidance.[3]

Davies' twin roles as *Mercury* owner and Theatre Royal manager/lessee were good for the theatre. In its official history, author Michael Roe remarks that Davies' background as actor, publican and journalist fitted him well for the role. The *Mercury* had waxed poetic about the charms of the theatre in a series of advertisements and editorials, which told its readers that the renovated theatre was 'the most elegant in the Southern Hemisphere'. Davies was encouraging no cultural cringe, advising Hobartians 'that if to the charms of scenery and climate are added the graces of art, this capital could become the prosperous Paris of Australia.'[4]

One of the more interesting appointments made by Davies to the editorship of the *Mercury* was John Donnellan Balfe in 1868. The name Balfe was to have a long link with the newspaper, and a strong connection with Albert Ogilvie, as alluded to in a previous chapter. John Balfe was a controversial figure, who was branded a traitor and a spy for the English Government by the Irish Confederation, before migrating to Van Diemen's Land in 1850. Balfe was able to carve out a political career and find use for his journalistic skills, despite the barbs and taunts of his detractors about his treachery.[5] Balfe's use of invective was a regular part of his commentary and Davies was not protected from his pen. On one occasion he wrote of

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[3] F. C. Green, 'Davies-John (1813-1872)' Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/davies-john-3374/text5101, published first in hardcopy 1972, accessed online 30 March 2015.

[4] Michael Roe, *A History of the Theatre Royal, Hobart, from 1834*. Hobart, 1965, pp. 7-9.

[5] Stefan Petrow, `Judas in Tasmania: The Career of John Donnellan Balfe' in *Tirra Lirra: The Australian Independent Contemporary Magazine*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1995, p.38.

Davies that the 'venal and mercenary Jew bully's slanders have no terror for me.'[6] That was in 1858, but in 1861 he succumbed to an offer of editorship of the *Mercury* on 13 June, with the conditions that he vote in the Legislative Assembly according to the opinions expressed in his editorials and to abstain from all alcoholic drinks. Their marriage of convenience did not last long and, after Balfe consumed two pints of beer, Davies dismissed him on 24 September of that year.[7]

Under the ownership of John Davies the *Mercury* had a radical tinge and some appeal among the 'lower classes' who may have identified with the convict origins of the newspaper's owner. But after his death in 1872 the *Mercury* came to uphold a more caustic conservatism under the leadership of Davies' sons, Charles and George. The editor from 1883 was Henry Nicholls, who had earned a reputation as a liberal on the Victorian goldfields but was now of a very different political hue.[8] There was no shortage of liberal, or even radical, newspapers, including the Hobart daily the *Tasmanian News,* a liberal competitor to the *Mercury.* More radical was the *Clipper,* founded in 1893. Michael Roe writes that Launceston's *Examiner* matched the *Mercury* in defence of the Establishment, although it too had more liberal beginnings, speaking out against convict transportation and veering towards republicanism. Even more enduring than the Davies brothers in Hobart was the Harris family, who ran the *Advocate* from Burnie and Devonport offices.[9] In the years which followed Federation in 1901, the three Tasmanian dailies had gradually, and then firmly, established their place as the centre of conservatism and respectability.

John Donnellan Balfe's son, Oscar Balfe, became a respected journalist and editor. Oscar Balfe was the editor of the *Weekly Courier*, published in Launceston, at the time of his death in 1921. The *Examiner* printed a glowing tribute, reporting that many accolades from southern admirers had been received. Among the chief mourners were three of the deceased's sons, including Eric Balfe.[10] Eric Balfe was a scholar at St Virgil's College when it was founded in 1911, the year that Albert Ogilvie attended part-time to improve his Latin as a way to enhance his law studies at the University of Tasmania.[11] Many years later, when Ogilvie was

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[6] *Mercury,* 22 November 1858, p.2.
[7] Petrow, 'Judas in Tasmania', p. 42.
[8] Michael Roe, *The State of Tasmania: Identity at Federation-Time*, Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Hobart, 2001, p. 4.
[9] Roe, *The State of Tasmania,* pp. 4-5.
[10] *Examiner,* 17 March 1921, p.5.
[11] College Record 1911, *St Virgil's College Archives.*

struggling as Leader of the Opposition from 1929 to 1934, his relationship with the *Mercury* was bitter and hostile in the extreme. Personalities must have played a major role in this, regardless of the then conservative nature of the *Mercury*. The newspaper's political editor, L. Broinowski and its political correspondent, Jack Judd, were the main players in opposition to Ogilvie.[12]

When Ogilvie came to power in 1934 nothing much had changed. He won the election despite heated opposition from the newspapers, although, in the aftermath, the *Examiner* conceded Ogilvie's promise to abolish high school fees within 24 hours had been honoured and the new Government's education record was good. At the *Mercury* little had changed. Continued hostility from Judd resulted in Ogilvie refusing any information from the Government. This was an impossible situation for the newspaper and it replaced Judd with the more compatible Eric Balfe. The two men, whose relationship started as young adults at St Virgil's College in 1911, resumed their friendship and mutual respect. Balfe was impressed at the way Ogilvie cut red tape to ribbons. When the pinnacle road to Mount Wellington was completed in 1938 Ogilvie motored to the ceremony in triumph, with Balfe as his passenger.[13]

A comedian once quipped that behind every successful man there is a person who 'went to school with him'. Eric Balfe's relationship with Ogilvie is documented in personal notes the journalist prepared for a proposed history of Tasmanian politics, which was never completed. Given the general animosity between the *Mercury* and Ogilvie it was extraordinary that Balfe and Ogilvie enjoyed such mutual trust and respect: 'There were occasions when I went to his office, at his invitation, and discussed with him confidential matters at times before he talked them over with his ministers and his party,' Balfe wrote.[14] Balfe continued: 'He would impose a ban of secrecy on matters that could not be divulged at the time, but which were good news value. There were times when leaks would come from other sources, but he was shrewd enough to know that his confidences would not be broken.' Balfe was frank in judging that Ogilvie had his faults and they were many: 'He was unforgiving so far as those who trespassed against him were concerned. He could be vindictive and ruthless when his path was crossed, but his

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[12] R. Davis, *Eighty Years' Labor: The ALP in Tasmania, 1903-1983*, Hobart, 1983 p. 24.
[13] Davis, *Eighty Years' Labor*, p. 32
[14] Notes on History of Tasmanian Politics which E. G. Balfe proposed to write. NS 603/1/16. Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.

shortcomings were more than balanced with a brilliant brain, sound leadership and an undeviating sense of loyalty for those he regarded as friends.'[15]

Balfe's notes also indicate a devious side to Ogilvie's nature, both in serious matters and in lighter mode. Ogilvie, when in opposition, was able to embarrass the McPhee administration because of intimate knowledge of what was going on behind the scenes in the government and the public service. Balfe suggests these contacts could have been called spies: 'By this means he [Ogilvie] got to know that the Hydro-Electric Commission was about to recommend the construction of the Tarraleah Power Scheme, a job to cost £1,500,000, which was a lot of money in the days of the Great Depression. His informant later became one of the top ranking members of the Commission staff.' Sir Walter Lee, who took over leadership of the Nationalist Party, was scathing about the way he said Ogilvie had scooped his party in the build up to the 1934 election. Lee accused Ogilvie of obtaining information as to those recommendations, even to minute details, and, with characteristic impudence and authority, was claiming that the carefully thought out and technically prepared plans of the Commission were the carefully considered schemes of the Labor Party. The Tarraleah project was started soon after Ogilvie took office. During the throes of the Depression, angry unemployed people began swarming through government buildings, demanding work. Salaries of government employees had been cut. Ogilvie ensured the votes of public servants by promising to restore 50 per cent of previously cut salaries, compared to Lee's offer of 25 per cent.[16]

Another anecdote from Balfe indicates much about Ogilvie's irreverent and sometimes vindictive nature. As head of state Ogilvie was called on to receive the Duke of Gloucester on a Royal Visit. Balfe had occasion to call on Ogilvie when he was vetting the carefully compiled list of guests to be invited to a state ball at the City Hall. Pencil in hand, he was crossing out name after name. 'Why should he be invited?' he would say. 'He is no friend of mine – and by the way, how many tickets would you like?'[17] This showed Ogilvie knew the value of his relationship with Balfe, despite previous and sometimes ongoing difficulties with others at the *Mercury*.

During the dark days in Opposition Ogilvie almost appeared to be granting a free kick to the forces of conservatism and the press. In the 1931 election campaign Ogilvie came out with a bold program of reforms. These included abolition of the Legislative Council, state

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[15] Notes on History of Tasmanian Politics which E. G. Balfe proposed to write, NS 603/1/16. TAHO.
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] Ibid.

governor and the agent-general in London. He mooted a moratorium on debt and redistribution of taxation and derided the need for a balanced state budget. This must have been manna from heaven for the *Mercury*, which, according to Richard Davis, frightened the public with images of Jack Lang in New South Wales, who had been dismissed by the Governor for repudiating state debts.[18] Already given little chance of success, Ogilvie probably thought he had little to lose in advocating such radical change.

The radical policies presented by Ogilvie in 1931 proved not to be vote winners, but they were, in many instances, party policy five years earlier when Joe Lyons was Premier and Ogilvie was Attorney-General. The Tasmanian division of the ALP, at its annual conference in February 1926, adopted similar policies. Reform of the Legislative Council was high on the agenda and it was resolved to abolish it. Abolition of state governors was another adopted policy along with equal rights of citizenship for men and women, free education for primary, secondary and tertiary students and hostels for state high schools. Other policies included equal pay for both sexes, adequate workers' compensation, an eight-hour day for workers, a fair rents board, day baking and prohibition of employment for children under fifteen.[19] Although being painted as the ultra-radical in 1931, Ogilvie was remaining true to his beliefs and Labor principles, while Lyons had disappeared to Canberra, eventually to turn to the right and abandon the party. By 1933, when victory the next year was a possibility, Ogilvie had not relented on the issue of the governorship. He said that although the Government could not feed the poor, it could to bring out a governor from Britain and pay him £100 a week to feed a few people who were already overfed.[20]

The extraordinary political journey of twenty years which had Albert Ogilvie as the thorn in the flesh of the Legislative Council, the Establishment and the Press, was played out with such heat and vigour that it is wondrous how Ogilvie survived. The main means of communication was newspapers, although towards the latter years of his political life Ogilvie used radio broadcasts to good effect. Ogilvie's prickly nature and ambition would not have endeared him to the press from the very beginning. But he clearly had an ability to gain the support of the electorate, even if he was unpopular in his own party or of those who controlled the press.

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[18] Richard Davis, *Irish Traces on Tasmanian History 1803-2004*, Hobart, 2005 p.116.
[19] *Advocate*, 26 February 1926, p. 2.
[20] *Mercury*, 9 June 1933, p. 11.

Ogilvie's war with the *Mercury* was almost self-imposed and it appears that he enjoyed the jousting. Well before his rise to the premiership, struggles within the party itself, or against a hostile newspaper, Ogilvie was always on the front foot. Even his personal triumph in being named King's Counsel in 1926 was soured by suggestions that he had influenced the decision through his position as Attorney-General in the Lyons Government. On 14 January both the *Mercury* and the 'Entre Nous' column of the London periodical '*Truth*' ran similar comments that, while congratulations were in order at Ogilvie becoming the youngest KC in the Commonwealth, it was doubtful if all members of the Tasmanian Bar will make their congratulations very hearty.[21] Their concerns were that all members of the Bar, senior to the would-be KC, should be informed of his application. The newspapers alleged that the Chief Justice, Sir Herbert Nicholls, returned from six months leave on a Friday and spent the next morning with Ogilvie, and on the following Monday the latter was made a KC. The *Mercury* said there was a feeling among senior members of the Bar that both Ogilvie and the Chief Justice had been 'slightly contemptuous of tradition.'[22]

The following day Ogilvie said those statements constituted a complete and unworthy misrepresentation of the position and that there was no obligation upon him to apply to the judges for the position of King's Counsel, as he was entitled to it as a matter of right by virtue of the office which he occupied. Ogilvie wrote that his reason for applying to the Acting Chief Justice on 5 August the previous year was because he knew the *Mercury* would be sure to suggest that he had taken advantage of his position: 'To avoid the inevitable imputation of your journal I, in an excess of caution, applied on 5 August to the Acting Chief Justice, Mr Justice Crisp. Mr Justice Crisp, who was indisposed at the time, considered he should have the concurrence of the Chief Justice on his return from sick leave.'[23] Ogilvie produced a letter from the Chief Justice, which the *Mercury* printed on Saturday 16 January, stating that everything was in order and that Ogilvie was entitled to be made a King's Counsel. Ogilvie went on to say he knew where the subject matter of the paragraph came from. Ogilvie declared this un-named legal practitioner evidently did not understand the constitutional practice governing such appointments and resented it. The practitioner, clearly a political opponent, according to Ogilvie, resented his appointment: 'I can assure you he does not resent my appointment any more than I resent the contemptible attempt by your journal to lead the public to infer that His

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[21] *Mercury*, 14 January 1926, p.6.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Mercury*, 16 January 1926. P.9.

Honour, the Chief Justice, is in any way failing to act strictly according to constitutional practice.'[24]

Ogilvie's personal war with the *Mercury* was long and colourful. Michael Denholm writes that throughout the 1920s Ogilvie was the subject of personal attacks in the newspaper, which dismissed him as a comparative newcomer to the Labor Party as early as 1923. If the party failed, the fault would lie with the young Ogilvie. Ogilvie clashed repeatedly with the *Mercury* and in 1925 he slammed the newspaper for saying that he would stoop to the lowest depths to obtain his ends. Ogilvie criticised the *Mercury* for its 'unrelenting vindictiveness and unscrupulousness with which it is persistently attacking me personally.'[25]

The battle lines were firmly drawn and it took many years for Ogilvie to break through the barriers and to get, as he saw it, a good run in the southern daily and its two intrastate contemporaries. Even after the 1937 election victory the *Mercury* could find only grudging praise for Ogilvie in its editorial columns. It alluded to 'certain acts of administration in which the Premier acted in a manner which provoked criticism.'[26] The editorial said it was not its intention to revive these memories, except to suggest that the Premier might be well advised in the future to act with less impulsiveness: 'He is, to put it with perfect frankness, a man who is by nature and by development, impatient of opposition and of criticism and, therefore inclined to act on impulse with consequences which are uncomfortable and unfortunate for all concerned, including, perhaps, himself.'[27]

Flushed with success, a confident Ogilvie lashed out at his enemies. On the same day, the *Advocate* ran a story in which the triumphant Ogilvie claimed his victory at the polls showed the value of policy over personalities. He claimed that a constant stream of abuse, personalities and invective seemed to be the only policy of which his opponents had to put forward. Ogilvie said he had been called Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, Little Albert, Dictator and finally, by the Leader of the Nationalist Party [Mr H. S. Baker], a megalomaniac.[28] Ogilvie did not mention newspapers by name but the inference was clear: 'If my colleagues, the party, or myself, do anything which they consider against the best interests of Tasmania, they should at least be

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[24] *Ibid.*
[25] Michael Denholm, `The Politics of the Push: An Examination of the record of A. G. Ogilvie in the Lyons Tasmanian Labor Government 1923-28' in *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings,* June, 1978, Vol 25, No. 2, pp. 38-41.
[26] *Mercury*, 22 February 1937, p. 8.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Advocate*, 22 February 1937, p. 4.

prepared to deal with such matters on the floor of the House or at a public meeting.'[29] Ogilvie appeared to be saying that the Opposition fought the campaign from the pages of the newspapers.

A chastened *Examiner* conceded Ogilvie and the Labor Party had enjoyed a complete victory, convincing the electorate to agree with Ogilvie that increased government spending would circulate money and therefore mean more business and jobs for them. The *Examiner* said it would give 'every support to the Government in those matters in which we think it is acting for the good of the state'.[30] But the newspaper was still ready for a fight: 'When the occasion arises we shall not hesitate to say plainly what we think, but, as in the past, that criticism will be based on the facts as they are, and will be uncoloured by the fact that the Premier, in his hour of triumph, has again attempted to heap opprobrium upon us.'[31]

Three years earlier, when Ogilvie had come to power in the 1934 election, a confidential letter from Ogilvie to the Minister for Lands and Works, Thomas Davies, illustrates the depth of feeling and distrust Ogilvie harboured against the Launceston newspaper. Davies had relayed a message from the *Examiner* that a member of its staff should be appointed a Justice of the Peace. Ogilvie replied that the matter should be deferred 'until we see how the *Examiner* treats us.'[32] The *Examiner's* attitude and editorial policy by 1937 does seem more positive towards Ogilvie and his party than its southern counterpart at this time. It continued after Ogilvie's death, according to Rhodes Scholar, parliamentarian and geographer Bob Solomon. Commenting on the post-World War II era, Solomon, a 'small l' Liberal who represented Denison in the House of Representatives from 1969-72, said that in the 1950s, and well before, the *Examiner* was under a truly liberal management at the time, in contrast to 'glaring bias in favour of the Establishment displayed by the *Mercury* in Hobart.'[33]

Ogilvie's victory was sweet and appears to have silenced some of his critics in the press. The results were astounding. The Labor Party won 58.67 per cent of the vote and the Nationalists 38.86. Eighteen of the thirty seats went to Labor. The Nationalist Party, later known as the Liberal Party, was in opposition until 1969 and some commentators credit the 1937 result as laying the groundwork for successful long-serving premiers such as Robert

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[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Examiner*, 22 February, 1937, p. 6.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] Ogilvie to Thomas Davies, 23 October, 1934, PD8/1, TAHO.
[33] Interview with Robert Solomon, 22 May 2015.

Cosgrove and Eric Reece. Reece, near the end of his life, declared that he was proud of his own achievements, but said he regarded Ogilvie as the state's best ever Premier because he had lifted Tasmania out of the Great Depression. [34]

Reece may have modelled himself on Ogilvie in his dealings, and relationships, with the media.[35] During his premiership, the Government employed only one press secretary, who would have regular meetings with the political writers of the day for briefings. Reece would attend only if an important issue was at play. According to respected *Mercury* journalist, Wayne Crawford, Reece's style was to wander into the press room at Parliament House, tell a joke or two and casually background the reporters on an issue, if it suited him. On some occasions he would turn up at the *Mercury* newsroom on a Sunday evening and type out his own press release, or story. Reece also knew how to manipulate journalists and develop relationships with the most influential, in much the same way Ogilvie had done with Balfe.[36] Reece was Premier from 1959-69 and also from 1972-75. His time in office was about the end of the era without minders and spin doctors and nothing had changed since Ogilvie's premiership.

On the lighter side, Ogilvie continually gave the newspapers plenty of fodder for columnists and cartoonists, not to mention the biting satire of university revues. The Tasmanian University Union's eleventh 'Commemoration' performance in the Hobart Town Hall in May 1936 was a good example. The revue program was 'unassisted by Edney Moore or the Professorial Board but greatly assisted by A. G. Ogilvie, K. C.'[37] The revue program tells us that 'the entertainment took place in the Town Hall [In the Shadow of the *Mercury* office] under the joint patronage of B. Mussolini and H. Silassie [sic].' One of the highlights of Ogilvie's 1935 overseas trip had been a meeting with the Italian fascist dictator, which had been widely reported and more details of which will be included in a later chapter. Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie had been deposed during the Italian invasion and subsequent Italo-Ethiopian war. He had fled into exile in London and was appealing to the League of Nations for help against the Italian fascist leader. The revue program included a reminder that 'the

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[34] Jillian Koshin, *Electric Eric: The Life and Times of Eric Reece – An Australian State Premier*, Launceston, 2009, p. 350.

[35] Interview with Wayne Crawford. 15 June 2015.

[36] Crawford interview, 15 June 2015.

[37] Edney Moore was a well-known Hobart printing firm.

*Mercury* is at your disposal during the interval.'[38] The prominent Hobart solicitor Bruce Piggott implies that Ogilvie did not appreciate the satirical humour, which included references to the Royal Commission of the previous decade. Ogilvie, according to Piggott, threatened to reduce the Government subsidy to the university, for such theatrical performances.[39]

Sometimes the almost good-natured barbs from theatrical performances say more than the serious cut and thrust of political journalism. Both the *Mercury* and *Examiner* ran weekly columns of similar style. Both included pieces of doggerel and veiled criticism of various aspects of Tasmanian life in rather witty and light-hearted style. The *Mercury's* version was called Passing Notes, delivered under the penname of 'Mercurius'. As early as 1924, when Ogilvie was Attorney-General in the Lyons Government, he was the target of arrows from 'Mercurius'. Ogilvie was a proponent of later closing times for hotels, which were then required to close at 6pm. The columnist pointed to Ogilvie's idea that a compromise time of 9 pm could please both the teetotallers and what 'Mercurius' described as the 'whole-hoggers.' 'Mercurius' raised the argument of what the Labor Party and the Trades Hall would think of bar staff working 12 hours a day.[40] 'Mercurius' even went as far as suggesting that the consumers and bar staff change places at half-time. The columnist had apparently not thought of the idea of casual staff working in the evenings. 'Mercurius' offered up a ditty which went:

O, comrade Ogilvie, what a clever chap you be.

And we thinks your little beer dodge mighty fine.

For we hates such silly tricks as shutting up at six.

A man would have a chance from nine to nine.

Chorus

Rule our Albert. Our Albert rules the trade.

Short hours for 'publics' never should be made.

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[38] From a photo-copied program of the Tasmanian University Union revue 14 March 1936. Supplied by Ogilvie family.

[39] J. B. Piggott, *Reflections of a Common Attorney*, Hobart, 1996, p. 69.

[40] *Mercury*, 15 March 1924, p. 11.

'Mercurius', showing his political colours, then lampooned the Labor side of politics by suggesting the Trades Hall might like to buy the copyright and get the virile words set to music, 'for use as an occasional alternative to 'The Red Flag' of which, perhaps, sometimes the party gets a little tired.'[41]

A few years later, in 1929, when Ogilvie was Leader of the Opposition, 'Mercurius' reported on the results of a Franklin by-election for the House of Representatives in which the *Mercury* had supported the Nationalist candidates. The Labor candidate had triumphed against all odds, according to Ogilvie. 'Mercurius' accused Ogilvie of praising the Returning Officer at the declaration of the poll, while abusing everyone else: 'If you have on one side, self-sacrifice, enthusiasm and sincerity, with only paid propaganda, thugs, *Mercury* distortions, and Capitalism's ill-gotten gold opposed to it, what is the inevitable result?' Ogilvie asked.[42] His answer: 'A victory for the party which has the honour to follow my banner.' 'Mercurius' reported that this was followed by frenzied applause, during which a *Mercury* reporter was 'torn into ribbons.'[43] 'Mercurius' then launched into his usual poetic style to have the last say, his pen dripping with irony and invective:

> L is for Labour – hurrah, hurrah, hooroo.
>
> And M for 'the *Mercury*' distorted and untrue.
>
> Which cannot back the winning horse, or even Number Two.
>
> And:
>
> L is for Labour. It heals the blind and lame.
>
> A is for Albert, who guards the sacred flame.
>
> S is for self-sacrifice, which is his middle name.[44]

Other verses follow a similar trend and, although on the more trivial side, portray the state of verbal warfare existing between Ogilvie and the Hobart newspaper. Ogilvie was enjoying the situation as the Federal by-election was fought between two endorsed Nationalist candidates, an independent Nationalist, Labor's C. W. Frost and another independent, P. Murdoch. On the

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[41] *Mercury*, 15 March 1924, p. 11.
[42] *Mercury*, 28 December 1929. p. 3.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Ibid.*

Monday after the by-election the *Mercury* had all but declared the winner would be Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Blacklow, ahead of fellow Nationalist A. C. Seabrook.[45] Some preference leakage to Frost had enabled him to win, which had encouraged Ogilvie to be so chirpy and enjoying the fact that the *Mercury* was unable to pick the winner.

The *Examiner's* equivalent columnist wrote under the name of 'The Showman' and had a similar poetic and theatrical style. After the 1931 election it was generally acknowledged that Ogilvie had little chance of future success. 'The Showman' compared the slick and unbeatable Premier, J. C. McPhee, with Albert Ogilvie playing opposite the star. He described Ogilvie as probably one of the screen's most able actors, but doomed to sub-stardom: 'Perhaps if he changed his company he would have a better chance,' 'The Showman' opined, 'then again, some actors who shine in near-star parts fall when they become central figures'.[46] Three years later, Ogilvie's stocks were looking much better and he was on the verge of stardom, after treading the boards in opposition for so long. The election was one of two big events – a Test match against England was in full swing and the *Examiner* promised to post both cricket scores and election results at the Town Hall. 'The Showman' launched into a long 'poem' comparing the two events. He hinted that Don Bradman was not likely to get his seat [Australia was struggling for form in its tour of England], but 'when Albert Ogilvie's in his stride, Australia's going to be home and dried.'[47] The election result was very tight and we can only guess at whether 'The Showman' was seriously conceding Labor a chance of victory before the count. That election was close with Ogilvie winning with the support of independent G. S. Carruthers, an ex-Labor man.[48]

The emergence of the *Voice* newspaper, as a vehicle for Ogilvie and other Labor people to oppose the conservative press, was a mixed bag for Ogilvie. By the time of his death, the *Voice* was eulogising Ogilvie almost as a Labor saint, but in the first year of its publication the newspaper declared it could no longer support Ogilvie because of the Public Trust Fund scandal. The *Voice* suggested there was no option but for Ogilvie to walk out of public life.[49] Within a few years *Voice* was singing the praises of the Labor Premier for his achievements

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[45] *Mercury*, 16 December 1929, p. 9.
[46] *Examiner*, 11 July 1931, p. 9.
[47] *Examiner*, 9 June 1934, p. 13.
[48] Michael Roe, `Ogilvie, Albert George (1890-1939)' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.au/biography/ogilvie-albert-george-7889/text13717, published in hardcopy 1988, accessed online 20 July 2014.
[49] *Voice*, 15 October 1927, p. 2.

including shorter working hours, controlled off course betting, ten o'clock closing of hotels and free medical service. The paper suggested Ogilvie had been inspired to provide free medical care and cheap medicine during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1935.[50] When Ogilvie died the *Voice* published a sonnet, penned by 'The Schoolman', which portrayed Ogilvie as a gallant knight and 'true to his pledge to speed the public good' and 'that Tasmania mourns a brilliant son today.'[51]

Ogilvie's struggles with the Legislative Council seem to mirror his confrontations with the press. From its birth in early colonial times, the Council had always reflected everything that was conservative and 'respectable'. The original Council was established by an act of the British Parliament in 1828. The Council consisted of fifteen members, six of whom were officials and eight non-officials, with the Lieutenant-Governor presiding. The Secretary of State explained that the Council would be 'fairly selected from the more intelligent, wealthy and respected members of the commercial, agricultural and professional bodies of the colony.[52] The old Council lasted until 1851. The next version was at best only slightly more democratic in that it was divided into electoral districts to provide two-thirds of the membership, the remainder appointed. The Lieutenant-Governor of the day, William Denison, fearful of the radical and unruly elements that congregated in towns, deemed that Hobart should have but two seats and Launceston one out of the sixteen to be elected, even though the two towns had 40 per cent of the total population.[53] It was little wonder that the traditions of the Legislative Council put it firmly in the camp of the conservative forces well into the twentieth century and this image still persists today.

Ogilvie's battles with the forces of conservatism were grounded in events way before his election defeats and triumphs. During the 1920s the twin enemies of the Labor Party were the Legislative Council and the three daily newspapers, who were firmly in the corner of the Upper House. A constitutional crisis of 1924-26 in Tasmania was every bit as bitter as, and of much longer duration than, the Federal version in 1975, which led to the Whitlam dismissal. Joe Lyons had come to power in 1923 as leader of the Labor Party, which had no members in the Legislative Council. The Council was generally regarded as the most conservative

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[50] *Voice*, 21 May 1938, p. 5.
[51] *Voice*, 17 June 1939. p. 1.
[52] W. A. Townsley, *Tasmania: From Colony to Statehood 1903-1945*, Hobart, 1992, p. 42.
[53] Townsley, *Tasmania*, p. 46.

legislative body in the British Empire.[54] Although Lyons had distanced himself from his former radicalism by 1923 and was increasingly regarded as a moderate, and almost conservative, Labor man, there existed a distrust of both Lyons and his Attorney-General, Ogilvie. Richard Davis writes that it is fair to say that after 1922 Lyons and Ogilvie regretted their loose talk of previous years.[55] Lyons may have been beginning his drift to the right in the eyes of conservative Tasmania, but Ogilvie was still regarded as the young radical. In 1925 the *Mercury* branded him 'our Tasmanian Trotsky' and warned readers Ogilvie was plotting against Lyons for the top job.[56] The second assertion was quite likely to have been true.

The confrontation between the Lyons Government and the Council was about the rights of the Upper House to amend money bills. Ogilvie fought the case with his usual legal brilliance, relying heavily on a Queensland case of 1886 in which the British Privy Council had affirmed the contention that the *Constitution Act* did not confer on the Council the power to amend money bills.[57] Such action is a means of forcing a government to an election without facing the electors itself. Ogilvie knew well that the abolition of upper houses had been a policy of the ALP since the 1890s. Ogilvie's legal partner, Thomas Okines, had almost been elected to the Council in 1925 on a platform of abolishing the Upper House. But the press was convinced the Council was doing the right thing in holding up supply. Lyons had once called the *Examiner* the 'mouthpiece of the Council.'[58] The newspaper could see no problem with the Council's actions and it had merely attempted to bring the state's expenditure within its income and that the Council represented the responsible element among taxpayers. Editorials suggested the more responsible Council should be above 'the people' as property owners would 'carry the burden of whatever the state has on hand.'[59] The *Mercury* went as far as warning that the confrontation with the ALP could be compared with what the newspaper considered the worst excesses of the Russian Revolution when it came to the extremism being displayed by the Government.[60] But the *Mercury* did report on rowdy crowds in the public gallery supporting

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[54] Kate Murphy, `The Lyons Government, the Legislative Council and the "One House Bill": the Constitutional Crisis of 1924-26 in Tasmania', *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2002, p. 81.
[55] Davis, *Eighty Years' Labor*, p. 17.
[56] Murphy, 'The Lyons Government, the Legislative Council and the "One House Bill" p. 85.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Mercury*, 26 November 1924, p.3.
[59] *Examiner* 27 and 28 November 1924, p. 4.
[60] *Mercury*, 1 December 1924, p. 6.

the Government and published a letter from H. E. Wells, of Glenorchy, who quoted a clergyman as saying Council members were 'past praying for'.[61]

The intricate and complicated legal and political jousting during the constitutional crisis cannot be fully detailed in this thesis. A final compromise was agreed to under the *Constitution Act* 1926. The Council maintained the right to reject money bills dealing with revenue and land and income taxation imposition but not to amend them. But it retained the power to amend all other money bills. It was a situation that pleased almost nobody. An independent member of the Council, D. N. Cameron, who was a former Anti-Socialist Party candidate, declared that his fellow members had 'betrayed their birthright by agreeing to this suicidal policy.'[62] Lyons praised the spirit out of which the compromise had been born and even Ogilvie endorsed the agreement.[63] The *Examiner* saw it as a back down by the Government, which may have avoided a settlement in the courts.[64] Lyons and Ogilvie later indicated they were not really happy with the resolution. More than a decade later Ogilvie introduced a Constitution Bill in response to another deadlock, threatening that it was the first step towards total abolition of the Council, but the deadlock was resolved.[65] This was in 1937 when the Council and Ogilvie came into serious collision. Some members of the Council objected to Ogilvie's rhetoric, jumping to the conclusion that he was about to lay Tasmania in ruins because of his 'socialistic' measures. Lloyd Robson writes that certain members of the Council were convinced they were in the grip of a madman. Ogilvie introduced the bill as a way of getting rid of the Council once and for all. Ogilvie was determined to destroy the Council's power to frustrate the wishes of the people's house. Conferences followed but Ogilvie was no closer to abolishing the powers of his political adversaries.[66] This was two years before Ogilvie's untimely death and we can only speculate about whether he would have eventually succeeded in abolishing the Council.

Ogilvie's battles with the Legislative Council continued throughout his parliamentary career. In the dark days of 1931, when the Great Depression was at its worst and Ogilvie was Labor leader, economic activity had deteriorated to an all-time low. Politicians had no answers. In September that year Neil Campbell, a Nationalist Member for Wilmot, moved that the House

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[61] *Mercury*, 26 November 1924, p.3.
[62] *Mercury*, 4 March 1926, p.8.
[63] *Mercury*, 4 March 1926, p.7.
[64] *Examiner*, 29 May 1926, pp. 4-5.
[65] W. A. Townsley, 'The Parliament of Tasmania' in F. C. Green (ed.), *A Century of Responsible Government 1856-1956*, Hobart, 1956, pp. 3-55.
[66] L. Robson, *A Short History of Tasmania*, Melbourne, 1985, p.112.

of Assembly be reduced in numbers to 20 members and the Legislative Council to ten. The idea was seen as an act of solidarity with the desperately poor working-class Tasmanians. Ogilvie responded by moving that the figure ten be amended to zero. He also called for the amalgamation of municipalities.[67] Again, Ogilvie seemed to be well ahead of his time. It took many more years to drag local councils into amalgamation and further municipal trimming remains a much-debated and difficult topic to this day.

Ogilvie's distaste for the Legislative Council was both personal and philosophical. In September 1935 he received a long letter from an entrepreneurial Sydney resident, seeking his views on a range of issues, including gambling. Logan Donald believed that Tasmania may be ripe to establish the first legal casino in the nation. He pointed to the number of other forms of gambling, from lotteries to horse and dog racing. Ogilvie seemed not opposed to the idea, something which would come almost four decades later. But he warned against even suggesting such enterprise while the conservative elements occupied the Upper House: 'With regard to the suggested casino,' Ogilvie replied, 'I know the members of the Upper House better than anyone else, and I am absolutely certain you would only be wasting your time and money in endeavouring to reason with them, because the majority are not open to reason.'[68]

Ogilvie's biographer Michael Roe suggests that Ogilvie's battles with the Legislative Council, and scorn for the Establishment, may have been almost contrived. Ogilvie was on friendly terms with Tom Murdoch, considered one of the most conservative Councillors. The two exchanged friendly letters when Ogilvie was overseas in 1935. Roe believes Ogilvie may have found it convenient to be able to blame the Legislative Council when his more radical policies were voted down, knowing they had no prospect of being passed in the Upper House.[69]

Ogilvie did not restrict his battle with the newspapers to local events. On his tour of Europe in 1935, he gave the Australian press a blast from afar during his time in Ireland. Ogilvie confirmed the substantial accuracy in reporting of a speech he made without notes in Dublin. In his address he declared that Australians get their news about Ireland from the daily papers and much of it is distorted and falsified by suppression, misrepresenting the people of the country. He said it would be his duty and privilege when he returned to explain the truth about Ireland to Australians. 'We have got to read between the lines to judge the truth of reports

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[67] Townsley, *Tasmania from Colony to Statehood*, p. 345.
[68] Ogilvie to Logan Donald, 4 October 1935, PD8/1/3, TAHO.
[69] M. Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha: World-wise Tasmanians*, Hobart, 2008, p.76.

of situations in various countries,' he said.[70] Ogilvie had met with President de Valera, most of his ministers and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and been given every opportunity to judge the situation. He promised to explain many things to the people of Australia which were not clearly understood, and to clear away any misapprehensions.[71] Even while basking in the glory of his international tour, Ogilvie was keen to ramp up the war with the home press. He knew his comments would have been republished or reported back home.

Although Ogilvie's battles with the local press were often toxic, he knew how to use the media to suit his interests. A good example was during his overseas travels. Ogilvie visited the Tasmanian offices at Australia House in London and asked to see L. F. Smeaton, the confidential secretary to the Tasmanian Agent-General. With dramatic effect and with reporters in tow, Ogilvie told Smeaton to pack his bags in preparation for a trip to Tasmania: 'I understand you know Tasmania better than I do. You must go there at once to advise the Government on trade affairs,' said Ogilvie.[72] And so the Empire's youngest Premier made a London clerk's dreams come true, the *Daily Express* journalist reported. Smeaton had joined the Tasmanian Government's London staff as a junior clerk. 'It was just a job,' he told the reporter. 'I had never heard of Tasmania. But the country [sic] began to fascinate me. By the end of a year, with the aid of maps, pictures and directories, I knew Tasmania as well as I knew London.'[73] The headline and introductory paragraph tagged Ogilvie as 'Albert the Fighter' to his friends. The story, which ran in at least two British newspapers, was the sort of political propaganda money could not buy and was probably more effective than twenty-first century set up stories of politicians in hard hats or worker's vests, pretending to be interested in the affairs of ordinary Australians around election time.[74]

The travelling Ogilvie appears to have enjoyed a very good press overseas. One report described him as a typical Australian lawyer, strong-willed, very direct and straight forward: 'He is a quick thinker and has a big – for Tasmania – and important legal practice.'[75] Ogilvie must have enjoyed the reception he was getting on the international stage, something he could not often attain at home.

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[70] *London Star,* 21 May 1935, p. 3.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] *London Daily Express,* 14 May 1935, p.8
[73] *Ibid.*
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] *London Evening News,* May 17 1935, p.10.

During Ogilvie's time in politics the print media was regarded as the primary source of influence, but Ogilvie proved to be the master of communication in the developing world of radio broadcasting. He even dabbled successfully in the use of the cinema newsreel, which was becoming a useful tool for propaganda and entertainment. Michael Roe writes that Ogilvie's zeal for the medium ran deep. One correspondent of Ogilvie's was told 'our success at the recent state elections is largely attributable to my utilising the broadcasting.' Ogilvie was referring to a broadcast of Parliament, but he also gave regular talks on commercial radio, paying the costs himself.[76]

During the Depression years, radio had come into its own and Ogilvie was, as ever, keen to show himself to be a modern man, coping well with changing technology. Hobart station 7ZR had started in 1926, broadcasting from the *Mercury* office. In Launceston 7LA soon followed. In Hobart, 7ZL became part of the ABC in 1932. Its first program on air included short addresses from Prime Minister Joe Lyons, Dr Earle Page and C. Lloyd Jones, chairman of the ABC, followed by local studio programs and news. Commercial station 7HO began broadcasting in 1930.[77]

W. A. Townsley writes that Ogilvie was the master of propaganda on the local scene and at least a decade ahead of his rivals in the use of radio broadcasting. In a decade when Roosevelt, Mussolini and Goebbels had used the medium so adroitly, Ogilvie gained a huge advantage on the Nationalist Party with weekly broadcasts of the 'Voice of Labor'. These broadcasts and Ogilvie's regular outbursts at Premiers' conferences increased his profile at home and interstate, resulting in a reputation as a doughty fighter for the cause of justice to Tasmania. 'As a political opportunist with a genius for improvisation, he knew that he could not create a new order without destroying at least parts of an old order,' writes Townsley, 'it was for this reason that the social Establishment distrusted him and continued to hate him long after he was dead.' Townsley believes that Ogilvie would have loved to get his hands on the large landed estates and break them up. Ogilvie believed this concentration of land ownership in a small number of families had, from the early years of the colony, been the main factor inhibiting the emergence of a thriving and prosperous community.[78]

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[76] M. Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 24.
[77] Lloyd Robson, *A History of Tasmania, Vol II: Colony and State from 1856 to the 1980s*, Melbourne, 1991, pp. 477-78.
[78] Townsley, *Tasmania: From Colony to Statehood*, p. 359.

Ogilvie's most dramatic and haunting use of broadcasting came on 12 March 1939 when he warned the nation about the prospects of war – not just in Europe but closer to home. It was fateful in the extreme – Ogilvie would be dead within three months. 'I am convinced that war may come,' Ogilvie said. Australia would be involved. Air attack and invasion were threatened and Japan was all but named as the planned aggressor: 'In their fools' paradise people attended sports meetings and theatres but now they must prepare for defence,' Ogilvie warned.[79] The next day's edition of the *Mercury* took a different view on the international situation. The newspaper asked just what information prompted such dire warnings. "If the Premier's dramatic warning is justified – and we do not doubt his sincerity – then the public are justified in demanding full details of the impending disaster. Where is the authority for this declaration of imminent danger?' the editorial asked.[80] Michael Roe suggests the editorial's tone hinted that Ogilvie was being histrionic, if not hysterical. Ogilvie's timing proved to be eerily acute. In the following hours Hitler quashed what remained of Czechoslovakia's autonomy.[81]

From this distance, there can be no doubting Ogilvie's fascination with the media and his skills in using it to his advantage. We can only guess at what his ever-increasing public profile meant to his detractors or supporters. But his approach clearly worked at the ballot box and in the way he was able to bring media outlets onside. It was sometimes only begrudgingly, but the results were extraordinary. He had admirers in the national media, including press barons like Keith Murdoch. After his broadcast, Ogilvie wrote to Murdoch, indicating the source of his inside knowledge. He thanked Murdoch for his support through Melbourne's 3DB and other stations. Ogilvie said the widespread reaction of leaders of public opinion had been so favourable that 'one must assume that the public needs a much stronger lead than we are at present getting from Canberra.' Ogilvie added: 'I make this comment in a strictly non-political sense.'[82]

Ogilvie's use of radio gave him a distinct advantage over his conservative rivals and he was the first Tasmanian premier to see the need for and exploit the use of propaganda. W. A.

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[79] His broadcast went out on several mainland stations, including Melbourne's 3DB, owned by Keith Murdoch, which was one of the most popular stations in Melbourne with a large audience.
[80] *Mercury*, 13 March 1939, p.8
[81] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie* Gaha, pp. 235-6.
[82] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 236.

Townsley suggests the Labor Party in Tasmania was a generation ahead of its political opponents through weekly broadcasting of the 'Voice of Labor' programs.[83]

It is clichéd in the extreme to say that we mostly speak no ill of the dead. The eulogies which poured in after Ogilvie's demise included many respectful editorials in newspapers both in Tasmania and interstate. His relationship with the press in his hometown had gradually improved from outright hostility to grudging respect and even admiration. In a thoughtful tribute two days after his death, the *Mercury* found mostly good things to say of its old sparring partner. In seeking to examine his popularity with the public the editorial focused, among many other things, on his outlook that was 'above all class considerations, and that he was known as "Albert" to all who had known him by that name in his humbler days and that he greeted all old acquaintances by their familiar names, with not the faintest note of condescension towards even the humblest.'[84] The newspaper went on to list some of his many achievements and reminded its readers that 'time and again we have fought him on political issues, but always fairly, and we endeavoured at all times to give him credit for the many fine things he did for Tasmania. These things will stand as his enduring monument.' He had, the editorial said, fought through stormy seas into comparatively calm waters. He had lived the full life and worked prodigiously in office and paid the price with his early demise: 'He was a hard enemy but a firm friend' it concluded, before offering condolences to his family.[85]

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[83] Townsley, *Tasmania from Colony to* Statehood, p. 359.
[84] *Mercury,* 12 June 1939, p.6.
[85] *Ibid.*

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT PERSONALITY: THE REAL ALBERT OGILVIE?

This chapter examines the ways in which Ogilvie became the scourge of the Establishment, while looking at his personality and the issues which drove him and created both enemies and friends in almost equal measure. His detractors looked upon him as the ultimate autocrat and the evidence could support their view. Ogilvie was also often unloved by those on the left, for many of the same reasons. His uncompromising attitudes and strong leadership on a variety of issues could not fail to create enemies within his own party and, of course, with those who opposed his style. The newspaper accounts, parliamentary records, court cases and eulogies tell us much about the public persona of Albert Ogilvie. Seeking the truth about his personality and the inner man is considerably more difficult. But a picture of a youthful Ogilvie, and then later in early middle age, shows us a man in a hurry, a risk taker and one who did not suffer fools gladly. In an earlier chapter, Ogilvie's daughter, Pat Rennie, told of a reckless, and an impromptu, car race between her father and his half-brother from Hobart to Launceston. Ogilvie and his brother Eric were keen roller skaters and an anecdote from Ogilvie's niece, Ann Connor, tells of them roller skating down the road from Mount Wellington at high speed, when both men were into their thirties.[1]

This chapter also includes references and anecdotes which may not, in themselves, demonstrate anti-Establishment images, but they show a recklessness and larrikinism of which the Establishment would not approve. Ogilvie and motor cars had a colourful relationship. Several incidents provide testimony to this. In 1915, well before his time in the Parliament, he was sued for compensation, following an accident in the city when a pedestrian was knocked down by Ogilvie's car. The *Mercury*'s headline asked: 'Who was in control?' It was a rainy night and the defendants alleged that the plaintiff was walking across Davey Street without taking due care, and with his head under an umbrella. Ogilvie was then a young single man of 25 making his way in the legal world. He was defended by W. M. Hodgman and Ogilvie's later legal partner, T. A. Okines, in a civil suit with the pedestrian asking for £300 damages, a considerable sum at that time.[2] Ogilvie agreed that it was his car, but that it had been driven by one of his friends who had borrowed it for the evening. Ogilvie said he had taken a lady to supper at Hurt's [restaurant] after attending the Theatre Royal earlier in the night. On coming

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[1] Interview with Ann Connor, 18 September 2014.

[2] *Mercury*, 15 April 1915, p.2.

out he found his car waiting and his friend, George Watt, was driving Ogilvie and other friends home when the accident took place. The trial took two days and it was finally judged to be 'an inconclusive verdict'. A jury of five could not agree on various aspects of the case, although they believed Watt to be the driver at the time of the accident. The plaintiff was awarded £60 in damages. The *Mercury* headline of doubt about the driver seems justified. The question seems to be why would Watt be driving Ogilvie home and not the other way around? [3]

Many years later, Ogilvie was involved in another spectacular motoring adventure, but this time he was seen in a more heroic capacity. Headline writers at the *Mercury* were in great form. 'Sequel to Murderous Assault' and 'Detective's Plucky Capture' and 'Commandeers Attorney-General's Car' dominated page six of the edition of 11 February 1924.[4] A man wanted for a serious assault had been apprehended after a day-long stake out by two detectives. The wanted man, Percy Linton, took flight after a scuffle with Detective Gibbons, who was in hot pursuit, despite being hindered by some of the accused's friends. While the chase was in full flight, Albert Ogilvie was motoring down Murray Street. Detective Gibbons jumped onto the running board of Ogilvie's car and shouted to him to race around from Murray Street into Melville Street to overtake the fleeing Linton. 'The Attorney-General complied,' reported the *Mercury*, 'and on the car turning into Melville Street, Detective Gibbons saw that his quarry had just come over the fence into Melville Street, running towards Harrington Street.' The detective jumped off the sideboard of the car and closed on the wanted man. 'Mr Ogilvie hurrying away to obtain assistance.' The policeman was having difficulty in handcuffing the prisoner and his efforts were marred by associates of the prisoner, including one woman, who 'pulled the detective off his prisoner'. A crowd of about fifty people showed hostility towards the policeman, but he was joined by a Sergeant Cooper, who had been alerted by our hero, and an arrest was made.[5] This may be the only time in Australian history, if not the Western world, when an Attorney-General assisted in the arrest of a felon.

A less glamorous, but equally exciting adventure from the driver's seat, happened in 1935 when Ogilvie was Premier. Ogilvie crashed into a tram in Macquarie Street and human damage was considerable. H. C. Smith, Ogilvie's personal secretary, received severe lacerations, as did the Premier. The *Mercury* reported that Ogilvie suffered a broken nose, lacerations to the face and chest injuries. Smith had a compound fracture of the left leg and

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[3] *Mercury*, 16 April 1915, p. 7.
[4] *Mercury*, 11 February 1924, p. 6
[5] *Ibid.*

abrasions and both men were admitted to hospital. 'It is stated,' the *Mercury* reported, 'Mr Ogilvie was driving behind a tramcar along Macquarie Street when, near the intersection with Anglesea Street, the tram suddenly slowed down and a man jumped off. Although the brakes of the motor car were applied immediately, the Premier was unable to prevent the car from skidding heavily into the rear of the tram.'[6] The newspaper report continued that Ogilvie was travelling at a mere fifteen miles an hour, although the tread on his tyres was 'somewhat worn'. Despite the relatively slow speed, the impact was severe and Ogilvie's 'nose was almost torn from his face.'[7] The report is colourful in the extreme, like most coverage of Ogilvie's Premiership, and there is constant use of the term 'it is stated' without other attribution. This included the opinion that he might have been able to avoid the collision by swerving to the side of the tram, but in doing so he would have endangered the passenger who had jumped off the tram. A much different story emerged after investigation by the tramway system, then controlled by the Hobart City Council. A sharp letter from the Council insisted that the tram had been stationary well before the impact with all lights showing. The Town Clerk threatened to go public with such information, 'in justice to the driver of the tram.' Ogilvie replied that he had never cast blame on the driver and suggested that Council argue no more. A month later Ogilvie wrote to a friend that his head injuries had left him somewhat rattled and depressed.[8]

The crash was reported interstate as well as at home. Sydney's *Labor Daily* of 15 January, reprinted in *Voice* [Hobart] on 19 January, sympathised with the Premier and the Tasmanian people. Being in hospital with a broken nose seemed the only way to slow down the Premier: 'A compulsory internment of this kind is perhaps the only thing that could prevent a high-speed activity that kept him always one move ahead of his friends and two ahead of his enemies.'[9] The report continued that Ogilvie possessed ability equal to his enthusiasm: 'Much will be heard of him.' The gushing report concluded that, 'unlike most politicians, he is handsome enough to be a matinee idol, so let us hope that his misfortune does not leave any disfigurement.[10]

On the lighter side, the need for speed may have been a family trait. Months after the tram incident when Albert, his wife and daughter returned from their European trip, then twelve-year-old Pat was interviewed by Victorian journalists as they disembarked from the

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[6] *Mercury*, 14 January 1935, p. 7.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] Michael Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha: World-wise Tasmanians*, Hobart, 2008, p. 29.
[9] *Voice*, 19 January 1935, p.8.
[10] *Ibid.*

*Orama*. She had experienced many excitements out of the reach of most children. Highlights included an audience with the Pope and meeting so many Royals in Britain that the youngster could hardly recall their names. But the greatest thrill for Pat was a car drive through France at speeds of 120 miles per hour. She did not say who was driving, but it seems more than likely Albert was at the wheel, given his record in these matters.[11] In the official record of this trip, written by Ogilvie, he relates a similar drive on German roads in a Mercedes Benz, driven by a German industrialist they had met in Berlin. He agreed to take Ogilvie for a run 'down the Rhine'. The roads were so good that they travelled at 120 miles per hour for a considerable distance. The driver declared his car could go as fast as 160 miles per hour: 'We decided to believe him,' wrote Ogilvie, who said the day was misty and wet.[12] The previously mentioned incidents and accidents suggest Ogilvie was as impatient, and perhaps reckless, behind the wheel, as he was in other aspects of his life.

Those who rise to prominence in politics or public life tend to divide opinion. For Albert Ogilvie this was true and evident in the extreme. Like most historical questions it is difficult to judge on matters of personality from a distance of nearly a hundred years, as in Ogilvie's case. A comparison of several opinions from those with links to the present may be worthwhile. Few political figures have so divided Tasmanians.

Starting close to home, my own father, aged 93 at the time of writing, when quizzed about his opinion of Ogilvie, said he had only vague recollections from his childhood and early adult days, but that his father, Walter Briggs, idolised the former Premier. His reasons concerned a commitment to education, but also in work for the dole programs like the road to the pinnacle of Mount Wellington and industrialisation policies such as hydro power development and generally attempting to promote Tasmania out of the doldrums in the post-Depression years. This information came as a surprise because my grandfather was of sober and conservative nature, a father of eleven and a struggling farmer.[13]

Academic and author John Biggs, writing about his father, Oscar, born in 1904, provides us with a very different opinion of Ogilvie. Oscar had no time for politicians of either hue, particularly on the Labor side. Oscar was 'scathing about Ogilvie's ego' and 'Ogilvie's

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[11] *Sun News-Pictorial*, August 27 1935, p.5.
[12] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p.171.
[13] Conversation with Frederick Briggs, 20 January 2015.

scar, as the road up Mount Wellington was often called. Oscar was a staunch monarchist, who taught maths and science at the Hutchins School.[14]

Another critic of Ogilvie was Alec Campbell who found fame as the last living Anzac. Long before Campbell's rise to ageing celebrity and becoming the pawn of jingoistic politicians, he had been active on the left of Labor politics. Ogilvie's troubles within his own parliamentary party were mirrored by his battles within the wider party and the labour movement in general. Campbell was a constant critic of Ogilvie at Labor Party conferences and elsewhere. [15]

During 1938 and the build up to war in Europe, the left was taking differing stances on how to face such threats. Joe Lyons was branded an appeaser for his slightly pacifist stance and inclination to find diplomatic ways to avoid war.[16] British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain made a speech on 9 March 1938 that the first priority was to protect Britain, followed by preserving trade routes to and from Britain, and finally the defence of British territories overseas. The third point was seen to be by far the least important. At the ALP conference in Burnie, on the same day, Ogilvie said the inference was that in plain language Australia had been told to look after itself. Ogilvie declared that a policy of isolation was no good to Labor or Australia. 'You cannot remain isolated very long in a jungle full of wild animals. Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler have brought about a state of affairs which made it imperative for England to undertake a tremendous rearmament program,' Ogilvie opined.[17] The Labor newspaper *Voice* went even further, scorning the 'nerveless and recreant' Chamberlain as one who had failed every test of will and was now abandoning Australia. Ogilvie won support around the nation from newspapers, including a telegram from Keith Murdoch, head of the Melbourne *Herald* and *Sun*.[18] But the issue divided the union movement and the left in general. Leading trade union men such as Bill Morrow and J. H. O'Neill were strongly against Ogilvie's stance. The Hobart Trades Hall Council opposed Ogilvie by joining the isolationist cause. One advocate against Ogilvie went as far as alleging that Ogilvie had shown himself to desire Fascism and a dictatorship for Australia.

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[14] John Biggs, *Tasmania over Five Generations: Return to Van Diemen's Land*, Hobart, 2011, pp. 162, 184.
[15] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p.225.
[16] David S. Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime: Australia's Enthusiasts for Hitler's Germany*, Melbourne, 2012, p. 43.
[17] *Mercury*, 10 March 1938, p.9.
[18] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, pp. 222-3.

Alec Campbell echoed such rhetoric.[19] Campbell had been a member of the hard left in the pre-war period, serving as Tasmanian president of the Australian Railways Union and he also led the Launceston Trades and Labour Council between 1939 and 1942. Despite his status as an 'Anzac Legend' – an honour he detested – Campbell remained forthright in his attitude to war.[20]

Campbell's relationship with Ogilvie may have been more pragmatic and his biographer Jonathan King paints him as a diplomat in the struggles between Ogilvie and those on the extreme left. Campbell, when president of the state council of the Australian Railways Union, intervened when Morrow attacked Ogilvie at the 1938 Labor Party conference after the Premier refused a rise in pay for railway union members while calling for an increase in defence spending in response to the threat of war in Europe. Ogilvie had called for 'enough fighter planes to make Australia's skies black with defending aircraft.' So virulent was Morrow's attack that it caused him to be expelled from the state executive of the Tasmanian Labor Party by 112 votes to sixteen. Yet Campbell was happy to have Morrow as his union secretary. Campbell was tempted by communism in the darker days of the Depression but remained loyal to the ALP. King writes that a union colleague laconically stated that 'the thought of voting anything else but Labor would have made Alec choke on his potatoes.'[21]

Ogilvie proved to be the master politician at Labor Party conferences, especially after Lyons had moved to Canberra. Ogilvie had complete control and was able to limit conflict or challenges to his own legitimacy. Neil Batt makes the point that most political leaders grow conservative with responsibility. Ogilvie continued to sound radical and attractive to the bulk of his supporters as he railed against the Nationalist Party, Legislative Council and Federal Government.[22] Labor historians, writing more recently, describe Ogilvie as a 'hot-headed lawyer' who took a disorganised party to a surprise victory in 1934, despite tensions within the unions.[23]

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[19] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 224-5.

[20] On Anzac Day 1994, while working as a journalist, I interviewed Campbell and walked with him back from the Cenotaph in Hobart to his car, which was parked in the city. He told me he had little regard for the glorification of war and only agreed to participate in the March and ceremony to please a younger friend.

[21] Jonathan King, *Gallipoli: Our Last Man Standing. The Extraordinary Life of Alec Campbell*, Milton, 2003, pp. 139-42.

[22] N. Batt, `Tasmanian Labor Party Conferences 1935-39', Papers and Proceedings of THRA, Vol, 26, March 1979, p.20.

[23] N. Dyrenfurth and F. Bongiorno, *A Little History of the Australian Labor Party*, Sydney, 2011, p88.

Another Albert George Ogilvie, nephew of our man, has no living memories of his uncle, who died before Ogilvie the younger was born. At best, Albert the younger can provide only anecdotal memories handed down by his father Eric. According to Eric, Albert was the more serious of the brothers, although he enjoyed a joke. Eric was often the life of the party and played the violin. Both could be described as a 'lady's man' in the vernacular of the day. Neither brother married young. It can be assumed they had a good social life before settling down, Albert in his thirties and Eric in his forties. Albert the younger gained the impression from his father that Albert was destined to work hard and take advantage of his God-given talents, while Eric seemed to enjoy life more. Eric studied law but failed to complete his degree. Eric had a colourful working career, including a stint interstate as a jackaroo. He was later to be Attorney-General in his brother's Cabinet. The younger Albert said he had been inspired to follow his uncle into the law. Being named for his famous uncle certainly helped him choose his career and he felt part of a smallish legal dynasty. His daughter Madeleine became a lawyer, championing human rights, and followed her great uncle and grandfather into the House of Assembly as a Labor member.[24] Another descendant, Peter Rennie, is the grandson of Albert. He has heard the stories of his grandfather from his mother, Pat. Peter Rennie says that being the grandson of a famous Tasmanian political figure had not affected his life choices. During his adult life he has been a swinging voter and was not moved to consider a career in the law or politics.[25]

Although we have few living links with Ogilvie, the fascination of the family with home movies gives us some insight into the personality of Albert and Eric. Albert made several films about their overseas trip in 1935, but it was mostly scenic views of interesting places visited. Films made of family outings and life at Alverstoke in New Town give us better glimpses of their personalities. Eric is often seen as the joker, playing joyfully with children, while Albert seems quieter and more reflective. As was the norm for the period, the men were dressed in their Sunday best for an outing to the Derwent Valley, where they watched rowers on the Derwent and picnicked at the Salmon Ponds. There is much merriment and good humour in these moments. We see Albert, good looking and dapper, in his Sunday best, almost strutting, even on a family occasion. Made in the 1930s, these visual records did not have sound, but give some indication of the real Albert Ogilvie in convivial surroundings, far from the

[24] Interview with Albert George Ogilvie, 13 May 2015.
[25] Interview with Peter Rennie, 24 October 2014.

antagonism of the parliament or the law courts. The Ogilvie brothers were often smoking in these images and also in several news pictures from the time. We can only speculate if smoking, so prevalent at the time, contributed to Albert's early death.[26]

Pat Rennie recalls a fiercely parochial side to her father and a need to promote his home city and state. He loved Mount Wellington and would proudly speak of its beauty, making favourable comparisons with the best in Europe. A later chapter, on Albert's vision for Tasmania, will explore this theme of Tasmania as a tourist haven and with the potential to be the 'Switzerland of the South.' Pat Rennie said her father favoured promotion of scenic beauty, such as visits to the Huon or Derwent valley or Mount Wellington, rather than Port Arthur, with its sinister past as a harsh penal institution.[27] Perhaps his convict heritage may have been a contributing factor to this opinion. It appears that his love for Tasmania was genuine and heartfelt. In an interview with Melbourne's [Catholic] *Advocate* newspaper when he returned from his 1935 European tour, Ogilvie declared Tasmania's scenery as second to none. Although impressed by the historic buildings of Italy, he did not think Italy's natural scenery so wonderful. The countryside in England, Ireland, Switzerland and Austria impressed him. 'But no natural beauty abroad surpassed that of Tasmania,' he told the newspaper.[28]

Internationalism was always a difficult area for politicians in the pre-World War II era. Ogilvie's visit to Europe in 1935 provided him with an overview of world affairs. It was, however, not easy to please everyone. From the comfort of many decades of hindsight, David S. Bird, manages to place Ogilvie alongside many of the appeasers of the Nazis, who had travelled to Europe to observe the new Germany and find much favour with it. 'Even the leftist Tasmanian Premier A. G. Ogilvie set aside ideology in 1935 in expressing a preference for the nightspots of Berlin over those of the dour Soviet capital,' writes Bird. 'He too was impressed with the ubiquitous labour squads that kept the youth of Germany so engaged.'[29] According to Bird, Ogilvie had little difficulty with National-Socialism, as long as it was restricted to Germany itself.[30] Bird seeks to lump most of Australia's politicians as little better than those in Britain and elsewhere who sat on their hands while Hitler's Germany was preparing for war. The criticism, in Ogilvie's case, does seem unfair, although there is a hint of prophecy in Ogilvie's observations. He was to later drive the work for the dole project of the Mount

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[26] *Family Archives of the Ogilvie* Family, NG 1959, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.
[27] Interview with Pat Rennie, 2 November 2014.
[28] *Melbourne Catholic Advocate*, 29 August 1935, p. 12.
[29] Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, p. 43.
[30] *Ibid.*

Wellington road, hardly of similar proportions to such schemes in Germany, but a scaled down version, perhaps.

Ogilvie's words can speak for themselves on his opinions of European leaders he met while travelling in 1935. Ogilvie was met by Victorian journalists when he arrived back in Melbourne and encouraged to give opinions of three of the major players he had encountered. Under a newspaper banner headline 'Dictators I Met' Ogilvie did not hold back. Ogilvie described Mussolini, whom he met, as a man of courage and a dominating personality, but at the same time he was 'vain, arrogant and ruthless.'[31] Ogilvie conceded that fascism had developed the country in building railways, roads and wonderful buildings. But Italy was in a mess financially and Ogilvie said he came to the conclusion that Mussolini was 'fostering war psychology and preaching against Abyssinia [Ethiopia] to distract the attention of the people from internal conditions.'[32]

Ogilvie's meeting with the Italian dictator is a highlight of the record he and Health Minister Stymie Gaha penned about their travels and is reproduced in Michael Roe's biography. That the Tasmanian Premier was granted an interview was, in itself, a rarity. Mussolini was seated in a large room, into which Ogilvie was ushered. The Italian was playing the game of being perfectly at ease, but making his visitor seem uncomfortable or nervous, almost ignoring Ogilvie, who strolled around the room, his feet clattering on the floor. He had to ask if he could sit down, to which Mussolini answered: 'certainly.' Despite the usual niceties of diplomacy, Ogilvie managed to get into an argument about the merits of giving unemployed workers the dole, something the Italian fascist would not tolerate. Ogilvie asked how a man unable to find work was expected to feed his family. Mussolini again emphatically stressed his belief in 'no dole'. Ogilvie repeated his question about how the unemployed were expected to live. He replied again about 'no dole'. Despite their differences Ogilvie seems able to have gained the respect of the Italian, who enquired how Italian migrants were faring in Australia, particularly in Queensland and at Mt Lyell in Tasmania. Ogilvie had been told Mussolini had refused autographs, even to visiting Prime Ministers. He cheekily asked for an autograph for his daughter Pat and was surprised to be given an autographed picture of Mussolini. As he left the room Ogilvie said he formed a mental picture of the Italian leader: 'One of the few outstanding men of the world, as a man of undoubted personality, courage, character, and

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[31] *Sun News Pictorial*, 27 August 1935, p. 4.
[32] *Ibid.*

efficiency, but also ruthless and ambitious beyond words; a man that many perhaps could respect, but few like.'[33] For a man who loved a bet on the horses, Ogilvie must have thought he had landed the daily double when he was granted a private audience with the Pope while in Rome. The pontiff spent many minutes with Ogilvie, his wife and daughter, enquiring about Tasmania and sending the Tasmanian people his blessings. The audience lasted so long that the Ogilvies almost missed their train to Venice.[34]

Ogilvie's views on the USSR would have angered his critics on the right. The Premier found much to like about life in Russia, although he conceded it was a dictatorship with a party membership of five million dominating the lives of more than 167 million. 'That is one side of the picture,' Ogilvie said, 'the other is that Russia is a country of debates and discussion. You can discuss anything you like, and make almost any criticism you like.'[35] Ogilvie said speech is free, as far as the administration is concerned. 'But they won't stand any criticism of the personnel of the government.' Ogilvie conceded that the Russians had definitely thrown religion overboard, replacing it with the worship of Lenin. He told of waiting in a queue of 20,000 to visit Lenin's tomb. Ogilvie did not see Stalin but met all his ministers: 'They are extraordinarily capable men. Most of them speak six or seven languages.' Ogilvie said he discussed trade with Australia with one of the ministers, M. M. Litvinov.[36]

Ogilvie warned of what may emerge in a Hitler-run Germany. He did not get a meeting with Hitler, but described Germany of the mid-thirties as chaotic and that no one can tell what lies ahead: 'Hitler's hand is everywhere and everybody is suspicious of his next-door neighbour.'[37] Ogilvie said he had never seen such caution and nervousness as he saw in Germany: 'If a man disappears, they are frightened to ask why, in case they disappear themselves next day.'[38] Ogilvie's critics could, justifiably, find fault in his generalisations, if that is what they were perceived to be, gleaned from official visits with not much contact with ordinary people. But a later chapter will deal with Ogilvie's commitment to humanitarian issues, especially helping refugees from Nazism. I believe this had its genesis in his travels in Europe in 1935.

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[33] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, pp. 106-7.
[34] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, pp. 110-11.
[35] *Sun News-Pictorial*, 27 August, 1935, p. 4.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*

An exchange of letters in mid-1936 when Lyons was firmly entrenched as Prime Minister and Ogilvie was well established as Tasmanian Premier, demonstrates which leader best understood the threats of Nazi Germany. Lyons wrote to Ogilvie on 31 July 1936 about a highly-contentious play which had been staged in Sydney. The play, *Till the day I Die,* had been causing much discussion in the community, according to Lyons. The author, Clifford Odets, was a member of the League of American Writers, which was affiliated with the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, regarded as a communistic auxiliary. Lyons attached a three-page synopsis, or outline, of the play, which had upset the German Government because of its 'insulting caricature of the German nation and its government', and requested it not be performed. Lyons wrote that the New South Wales Government had decided to prohibit the play, although the New Theatre League in defiance had produced it and that action was pending. The synopsis said that the play focused on atrocities by the Nazis and it was said to be 'sordid, even brutal, although powerful and moving.' It was frankly propagandist and had scarcely any objectivity. A German Nazi might particularly object to the description of one brutal and crazed character as a 'man like Goering.' There were also quotations from alleged broadcasts by Dr Goebbels, which show him in an unfavourable light. There were a few references to Herr Hitler.[39] Given Ogilvie's stated warnings about Nazi Germany and his long-running animosity to Lyons, his response was hardly surprising. No doubt conscious of the irony about the propagandist nature of a play that involved the master Nazi propagandist Goebbels and that Lyons seemed to be appeasing the Nazis with his warnings, Ogilvie waited nearly two weeks before acknowledging receipt of the warning with a dismissive one-line response: 'At the moment, it does not seem likely that any attempt will be made to produce the play in this state.'[40]

Other hints of Ogilvie's personality and views about life, come from his own pen. In a letter from London to the Minister for Transport, Tom D'Alton, Ogilvie tells of his frustrations and inability to get things done as quickly and efficiently as he would like. The letter is also indicative of Ogilvie's attitude to pomp and ceremony and a distaste for British ways. It also shows his confidence, bordering on arrogance. Ogilvie tells his colleague about the difficulty of arranging meetings but says he has never worked so hard.[41] There must have been public criticism at home about lack of information from London. He writes that negativity about his

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[39] Lyons to Ogilvie, 31 July 1936, PD1/552, Vol 549. TAHO.
[40] Ogilvie to Lyons, 12 August 1936, PD1/552, Vol 549. TAHO.
[41] Ogilvie to Tom D'Alton, written from London 28 May 1935. Copy supplied by Albert Ogilvie (the nephew).

investigations indicates insanity on the part of somebody. 'If the comment was in the *Mercury*, I suggest they send Broinowski over, perhaps he could do better.'[42] [Broinowski was then the chief political writer for the newspaper]. While defending suggestions about a lack of publicity for him in Britain, Ogilvie states that because he is regarded by the home politicians as the most extreme public man attending England at this time he has been successful at getting more publicity than other representatives of states and nations at the Jubilee celebrations: 'This place annoys me' he writes, 'to meet people requires going to long lunches and a night time meeting is almost impossible - one needs the digestion of an ostrich, a head like a rook, a throat like a chimney and hollow legs to get past them.'[43] Ogilvie complains that everybody gives the same speech. 'You know the class – first, God save the King, and then our wonderful empire, our loyalty to the King and the future of the empire. Then they sit down, having said nothing.' The nature of the people in general he describes as frigid: 'I have heard about the courteous London policeman, but, on one or two occasions, I have asked my direction and the reply took the form of a pointed finger, the head being held in a position that would indicate he had a bad smell under his nose.'[44]

Other private correspondence from London adds further weight to the view of Ogilvie as anti-British and frustrated at the time-wasting and traditions of the upper class. In a letter to friend and legal partner Nick McKenna, Ogilvie complained that there was a tremendous amount of work for him in promoting Tasmania and its industries: 'Those in responsible positions – and I am not now referring to the staff – do not work half as hard here as we do in Australia,' he wrote, 'It is very difficult to get them before 11 o'clock and they seem to leave their offices about four in the afternoon.'[45] When Ogilvie informed his British counterparts that he worked up until six and from eight till midnight he was greeted with 'looks of incredulity.' He attended a dinner for all the legal heavyweights from Britain, but declared it a 'weary business.' Ogilvie declared that, after the previous night's ordeal he did not intend to accept any more invitations than he was absolutely forced to.[46] True to his word, Ogilvie declined an invitation to the King's Ball at Buckingham Palace. On the day of the ball he wrote that he regretted that 'owing to a sudden disposition' neither he nor Mrs Ogilvie would be able to obey the command of their Majesties at the ball.[47] On the same day Ogilvie wrote to Acting Premier

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[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] Ogilvie to N. E. McKenna, 14 May 1935, PD8/1/7, TAHO.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] Reply to formal invitation to Mr Ogilvie from Buckingham Palace 14 May, 1935, PD8/1/8, TAHO.

Edmund Dwyer-Gray. He reported that, while others had encouraged him to attend the ball, he had resolutely refused, because it is mandatory to be dressed up in ruffles and breeches, in what is known as court dress. Ogilvie declared if he dressed like that he would be an object of ridicule throughout Tasmania.[48] Given his publicly espoused attitudes to monarchic pomp and ceremony, Ogilvie made a good point.

In a later letter to McKenna, Ogilvie appears even more fed up with British ways. Back in London, after meeting the Pope, Mussolini and leading German and Soviet officials, he had an interview with the King, but it appears not to have been a highlight of his European tour: 'I have met all the members of the Royal Family, dukes and lords by the score, but, believe me I will heartily enjoy a chop [on arrival in Australia]. I am sick of the sight of food and champagne and everything here is traditional'[49] Nick McKenna, later a Senator, became firm friends with Ogilvie, in and out of their legal office. Michael Roe indicates this was probably not surprising: 'In personality he [McKenna] was somewhat like his boss – tough efficient, ambitious,' writes Roe.[50]

It is clear that Ogilvie had little time for the monarchy or the trappings of the old empire. Research has presented no evidence that Ogilvie was overtly republican and it would not have been clever politics to denigrate Royalty in the period between the two major wars of the twentieth century. Labor politicians were engaged in a balancing act, especially those, like Lyons and Ogilvie, who could gain some advantage by a regular endorsement from the pulpit, but there were insufficient votes in it to sway the bulk of the electorate. When making his way into Labor politics as a young man Ogilvie upheld leftist and Catholic interests during the Great War and in the years soon afterwards.[51] An important part of this balancing act, for Ogilvie, was a commitment to socialisation and his religion. A cynic might suggest these principles had to be watered down in the quest for political success. Catholics made up only about twenty per cent of the electorate and even lesser numbers would have been committed socialists. Sometimes this difficulty could be over-estimated. Being an Anglican, who were the majority of Tasmanians, did not preclude one from voting on the left in state and federal elections.

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[48] Ogilvie to Dwyer-Gray, 14 May, 1935, PD8/1/7. TAHO.
[49] Ogilvie to N. E. McKenna, 12 July 1935, PD8/1/7. TAHO.
[50] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 11.
[51] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p.6.

Ogilvie was to triumph at the ballot box more from his personal appeal and charisma than from factional aspects of Labor politics, trade union affiliations or religious tribalism. Despite his radical beginnings, by the time he was part of the Lyons' cabinet in the early 1920s, Ogilvie was being described as a pragmatist.[52] Ogilvie's biographer, Michael Roe, suggests that in his more radical days Ogilvie may have played down his religious affiliations, but became more attentive to religious observance when Premier. Yet leading academic Morris Miller recalled that Ogilvie had sought advice from him, as a psychologist, to seek ways to diminish the Government's Catholic image.[53] Miller was firmly in favour of Ogilvie and admired his commitment to education, prison reform and mental health issues. Miller's admiration was rare. He rated Ogilvie and Alfred Deakin highly, but by 1945 scorned all then current politicians, believing that the country was best run by leading businessmen, financiers and industrialist managers. His views sound dramatically right wing by modern standards and it is greatly significant that he so admired Ogilvie, a man of the left, although pragmatic on many issues. [54] All these affiliations seem to have come to very little in the minds of the Franklin electorate, where Ogilvie secured a huge personal vote during the dark days for Labor overall in 1931, the narrow victory in 1934 and the triumph of 1937.

It would be wrong to apply the clichéd label of Irish Catholic to Ogilvie, given his heritage was Scottish on his grandfather's side and his father was a Freemason. His scorn for class-conscious English traditions ran deep. But the relationship between the British and those branded Australian Irish Catholics was always confused. Patrick O'Farrell encapsulates the issue well in describing the attitudes of Irish Australians to Britain: 'The Australian Irish were not really anti-British: or, more exactly, they were only anti-British because, and to the extent that, the Australian Establishment was pro-British.'[55] O'Farrell's take on this is that the Irish in Australia were pro-Australian. Such sentiments seem to fit Ogilvie's attitudes to Britain. Even his harshest critics could not deny his love of Australia, particularly his home state, and his desire to promote it.

The issue of religious tribalism in the twentieth century is complicated, and never more so than for Ogilvie. His daughter Pat reports that both Albert and Eric attended Mass during

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[52] Richard Davis, *Eighty Years' Labor: The ALP in Tasmania, 1903-1983*, Hobart, 1983, p. 25.
[53] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p.22.
[54] M. Roe, *Nine Australian Progressives: Vitalism in Bourgeois Social Thought 1890-1960*, St Lucia, 1984, pp. 304, 306.
[55] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Sydney, 2000, p. 299.

her early teenage years and there is no doubt that Albert identified as Catholic.[56] In the eighty years since then, nominal Catholics have attended church less frequently, some only once a year, or never. Ogilvie's downplaying of religion, as alluded to in the previous paragraph, seems good politics. I would argue that his belief stopped well short of being devout. A very good example of this came in 1937 in a fiery mud-slinging contest in the House about alleged impropriety, when J. F. Ockerby accused the Premier of having an interest in a mining company which had a contract with the Government. Members of Ogilvie's law firm Ogilvie, McKenna and Morris each owned one share in the company, which was a legal formality for the registration of the articles of association. Incensed by the inference, which Ogilvie described as 'mere filth', Ogilvie went further in his denigration of Ockerby: 'My only reason for standing up,' said Ogilvie, 'is in reply to remarks by the member for Bass, who calls himself a Christian. If his words are symbolic of Christianity, I am glad I am not a Christian.'[57] Ockerby represented the Nationalist Party from 1922 to 1946 and was an English-born conservative Christian, former Sunday-School teacher and a Methodist. Ockerby was Mayor of Launceston in 1925 and 1939. He was fiercely opposed to liquor reform and would have been an opponent of Ogilvie on that score and seen as a 'wowser' by Ogilvie. When the Nationalists morphed into the Liberal Party in 1946, Ockerby was not endorsed. [58] This was an amazing outburst by Ogilvie and may have been delivered in a light-hearted or jocular way. It may also have been misquoted slightly by the *Mercury* reporter, there being no Hansard in those years. But Ogilvie was well used to the cut and thrust of the courtroom and the parliamentary chamber. He is unlikely to have become rattled and over-excited and well able to choose the best words.

Ogilvie's jousts with Ockerby were spectacular. During the election campaign of 1937 Ockerby declared that a victory for Labor would result in a dictatorship by Ogilvie. No matter how moderate the individual candidates may be, a vote for any of them would be a vote for an Ogilvie dictatorship and that in the current Government no member dared to oppose the Premier: `The present Government is an absolutely one man Government,' railed Ockerby.[59] He accused Ogilvie of being an admirer of Mussolini, who had climbed to power on the backs of Labour before becoming a full-blown fascist. "I am wondering', asked Ockerby, 'if the Premier's tarrying in Italy to converse with Mussolini was accountable for his not being in time

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[56] Interview with Pat Rennie, 2 November 2014.
[57] *Mercury*, 5 October 1937, p. 11.
[58] *Examiner*, 2 July 1951, p. 3.
[59] *Mercury*, 17 February 1937, p, 13.

for the late King George's Jubilee.' Ockerby said that Mussolini's methods were abhorrent to every true 'Britisher'. Ockerby was satisfied that 'Tasmanians, who, as a people, are true to the glorious traditions of our forefathers will not tolerate any semblance of dictatorship, but at the coming election will sweep the present Government out of existence.'[60] In the days before regular opinion polls it was not easy to predict election results. Ogilvie, three days out from the election, appears not to have responded to Ockerby's barbs for once. He went to the election feeling confident of success and was rewarded with a landslide victory. Ogilvie's personal vote in Franklin was more than double that of H. S. Baker, Leader of the Opposition.[61]

The jousting between Ogilvie and Ockerby was often spiteful, but always entertaining, to say the least. Later in 1937 Ockerby, during a Parliamentary debate, was in fine form, labelling Cabinet Ministers Tom D'Alton and Thomas Davies as 'Adolf' and 'Benito' and comparing the Ogilvie Government with the Nazi and Fascist regimes of Europe.[62] Ockerby also raised the question of whether Ogilvie was about to appoint himself Chief Justice, as had been rumoured. Ogilvie dismissed the idea as 'today's funny story.' Ockerby said he hoped he would never have to be brought before Ogilvie in the courts. He would be sure to be a 'lifer'. Ogilvie replied that he may have to forget his principles on capital punishment if Ockerby did come before him. [63] Although there may have been speculation about a possible move to the bench, Ogilvie remained in office for the next two years until his death in 1939.

Religious tribalism tended to drive young radical Catholics, such as Ogilvie, to the Labor Party. The bulk of working-class Catholics in the earlier years of the twentieth century found themselves favouring the left, right up until the split in the 1950s, which gave birth to the Democratic Labor Party, favoured by conservative Catholics. Long before then, when Ogilvie was Premier, it was rare for Catholics to join the conservative side of politics. An exception was a young lawyer, Leo Doyle. Doyle was the father of Adrian Doyle, who became the first home-grown Archbishop of Tasmania. In 1938, Leo Doyle led a campaign in the House of Assembly about obscene literature. The *Mercury* reported that the debate created uproar among the Opposition and general disorder when Premier Ogilvie said he resented the inference contained in the motion that the Government 'countenanced the subject matter of the complaint.'[64] The importation or banning of such publications had traditionally been the duty

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[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Mercury*, 22 February 1937, p. 9.
[62] *Mercury*, 30 September 1937, p. 9.
[63] *Mercury*, 30 September 1937, p. 9.
[64] *Advocate*, 2 November, 1938, p.2.

of the Commonwealth Government, but the states had the role of policing the sale and distribution of such material. By today's standards the debate seems comical, yet banning books such as D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* continued well into the 1960s. Doyle produced several publications in the House, which he claimed were to show fellow members the horrors and 'serious moral danger' to young people. Doyle proposed to read from these publications in the House. These readings, Doyle suggested, would absolve members from any suggestion of prudery or squeamishness. He explained that all such publications had been purchased quite openly in Hobart and 'even more filthy books were advertised, with addresses on the mainland from which they might be secured.'[65] Doyle seemed to be going out of his way to publicise the material.

Ogilvie, who had developed a reputation fighting against 'wowserism' and favoured changes to gambling and drinking laws in the past, stopped short of lampooning his adversary. Ogilvie preferred, on this occasion, to take the high moral ground, declaring his Government would not stand for indecency and that he resented the inference in the motion that it had been a party to it. In this fiery debate, Ogilvie left it to his brother Eric, the Attorney-General, to fire the shots and evade the blows. Eric would often take on such a role. After some fiery invective from both sides, Eric Ogilvie declared that filth was not so much in the matter as in the minds of readers. Treasurer Edmund Dwyer-Gray suggested Doyle had taken an unwise course in advertising an evil without doing anything to check it. Doyle stuck to his guns by saying he would not concede his right to bring forward a subject 'which was even more important than the Government's taxation measures.'[66] Ogilvie's biographer, Michael Roe, suggests Ogilvie may have seen something of himself in the young capable lawyer and politician, despite Doyle being a Catholic so active in non-Labor politics. He may have gone on to bigger and better things had he not died aged 38, a decade younger than Ogilvie.[67]

We will never know the true religious commitment of Ogilvie. He had admirers and critics inside the Catholic Church. His relationship with the colourful priest, Thomas O'Donnell, is testament to that. O'Donnell was regarded as the best known parish priest in Australia and rose to Archdeacon in his later years. A vehement supporter of General Franco in the Spanish Civil War, vociferous champion of conscription during World War I and

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[65] *Ibid*
[66] *Ibid*
[67] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 229.

involved in numerous Royal Commissions and libel cases, O'Donnell was a dominant figure from the pulpit or courtroom. The priest was bitterly opposed to nationalisation of the banks. At the time of his death in 1949 he was involved in at least one libel suit being heard in Sydney.[68] The priest was never far from controversy. In 1921, long before he crossed swords with Ogilvie, O'Donnell made charges that certain police officers in the Latrobe district, where O'Donnell was stationed, were guilty of 'scandalous and improper conduct'. The police officers had been investigating a complaint that O'Donnell had pushed a man out of his house, jumped on him and dislocated his shoulder. O'Donnell claimed he had merely been ejecting a drunken intruder from his house. A Police Magistrate's inquiry found for the police and rejected that they had acted in a scandalous and improper way. [69] O'Donnell seemed a natural opponent of Ogilvie, yet at first things went smoothly enough and O'Donnell was chairman of the Royal Hospital Board during Ogilvie's Premiership. In 1936, it was proposed that the administration of the hospital be changed from a board to a commission. O'Donnell was bitterly opposed and suggested the hospital would be thrown into the political arena and become the plaything of politicians.[70] O'Donnell was replaced on the board in 1936 after a bitter struggle with Ogilvie and the two became enemies, despite their shared religious affiliations. In 1938, Ogilvie ordered the removal of O'Donnell's name from the foundation stone of the new hospital building. An enraged O'Donnell refused to attend the opening. [71]

During the controversial hospital power struggles in 1936 O'Donnell found an ally in the previously mentioned J. F. Ockerby. 'Stymie' Gaha was then the senior surgeon at the hospital and Health Minister in the Ogilvie government. Ockerby alleged, in the Assembly, that Gaha had performed a 'confidential operation' on one of the hospital nurses.[72] Even opposition members and the *Examiner* criticised Ockerby, who was forced to deny making any charges of abortion. The *Examiner* was very strong in its condemnation of Ockerby, who would regularly hurl charges across the floor of the House of Assembly: 'So frequent are his onslaughts that he should not be surprised if one of these days he is asked to prove his charges before a competent tribunal.'[73] The editorial said that parliamentary privilege should not be used as a cloak to enable one man to do an injustice to another. The editorial also noted that

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[68] *Mercury*, 5 September 1949, p. 5.
[69] *Advocate*, 1 September 1921. p. 2.
[70] *Catholic Standard*, 27 October 1936, p. 2.
[71] *Mercury*, 5 September 1949, p. 5.
[72] *Examiner*, 31 October 1936, p.6.
[73] *Ibid*.

the Leader of the Opposition took the first opportunity to dissociate his party from the statements of Ockerby.[74] Michael Roe believes that the archetypal Protestant moralist was acting in concert with the priest O'Donnell, who had publicly endorsed Ockerby's thrust. In a brilliant piece of wit, Gaha used his radio broadcast to echo Henry II by asking: 'Who will rid me of this turbulent [meddlesome] priest?'[75]

A very different story emerges of Ogilvie's commitment to his religion, which concerns the final hours of his life. It may be apocryphal, or even a modern myth. Members of the Ogilvie extended family have retold this story, although it cannot be substantiated. Albert Ogilvie the younger, his sister Ann Connor and Pat Rennie all mentioned this anecdote, but are unsure of its authenticity or its origins. [76] On the day of his death Ogilvie, in Melbourne for a meeting of the Loan Council, was said to have wandered into the Church of St Francis in the Melbourne CBD, where he sought the confessional. Within hours he was dead after suffering a heart attack on the golf course at Warburton. The suggestion is that the Premier had some sort of premonition of his own death and was purging his sins. No documentary evidence of this has emerged. It could be presumed Ogilvie would have been in the company of a staff member on this day, as he was on his way to a conference of state leaders. At best the story would have been a comfort to his family. His health had not been good in the months before his death but nobody could have guessed such a tragic end was in sight. [77] At a memorial service some weeks later, the new Premier, Edmund Dwyer-Gray, mentioned this supposed premonition. But as Ogilvie's biographer Michael Roe sums it up, why would he leave Hobart if he was suffering with ill-health and premonitions of an early demise? [78] Logic says that only two people would know the truth in this matter – Ogilvie and his confessor. Ogilvie was dead within hours and the confessor priest would not be able to relate the nature of things heard in the confessional, especially during the period in which Ogilvie died, when great debate continued over the issue of whether priests were legally liable to reveal such secrets when criminal charges were being heard in the courts. Deathbed confessions and conversions, along with famous last words, have

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[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 199.

[76] Interview with Pat Rennie, 2 November 2014.

[77] This anecdote is the subject of great doubt, despite it being well known to his family. If the confession happened only two people, Ogilvie and the priest, would have known. Ogilvie was dead and the confessor was bound by the secrets of the confessional. Ogilvie may have expressed some indication about premonitions of early death to others. Albert Ogilvie the younger remains fascinated by the tale, but is unable to cast light on its veracity.

[78] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 240.

been a rich source of inspiration and sometimes misinformation. On the lighter side, Voltaire, who waged a lifelong verbal battle with the Church, was visited by clergy on his deathbed and asked to renounce the Devil. He is said to have retorted: 'This is no time for making new enemies.' [79]

In death, Ogilvie was taken into the warm embrace of the Catholic Church. He had a spectacular funeral procession through the streets of Hobart, where admirers and those merely paying respects, lined the route. A brilliant panegyric was delivered by Archbishop J. D. Simonds, who described the dead Premier as a man who was not circumscribed by any narrow or pessimistic outlook upon Tasmania's future: 'He was an outspoken and tireless champion of the rights of the island state, and under his inspiration and with the confidence of the citizens, the Cinderella of the Commonwealth has been considerably strengthened,' said the Archbishop.[80] The Archbishop diplomatically conceded that it was not the province of a churchman to pass judgment upon party politics, but he paid tribute to Ogilvie's tireless devotion to work and duty: 'Divine providence had endowed him with rare mental talent and a virile and determined character, and he expended these great gifts unsparingly in the service of the Tasmanian people.' The Archbishop described Ogilvie as being endowed with a highly sensitive nature, and that he felt with unusual keenness the slings and arrows of unreasonable criticism. The churchman believed such hyper-sensitivity to criticism contributed to the untimely collapse of his physical strength.[81] The Archbishop must have seen something in Ogilvie which his political foes and friends alike could not detect. Hypersensitivity in the face of criticism does not correspond with Ogilvie's image of a fearless public attitude in the law courts or the parliament.

Ogilvie was ever conscious of the theatrical publicity grab, now so well honed in the spin-driven twenty-first century. He used language as a weapon against his enemies and knew how to win friends in the electorate. Lloyd Robson attempted to sum Ogilvie up as the dominator: `He was capable, energetic, fearless, impulsive, an ardent partisan and somewhat unscrupulous in executing his policy and furthering the interests of the ALP.'[82] Like so many people, Ogilvie became more pragmatic, and less the fiery left-wing radical, as the years

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[79] *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations by Subject,* ed. Susan Ratcliffe, Oxford, 2010, p.272
[80] *Advocate (Burnie),* 15 June 1939. p. 7.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] Lloyd Robson, *A History of Tasmania, Vol. II: Colony and State from 1856 to the 1980s,* Melbourne, 1991. p. 479.

slipped by. His reputation was, according to Robson, transformed from sharp operator and something of a larrikin, to a more agreeable member of polite society, with Governor Clark reporting to London with some relief that Ogilvie's earlier tendency to extreme Labor views had been eliminated.[83]

Ogilvie's intolerance of 'wowser' elements was overt and unceasing. It is easy to see how he enjoyed antagonising his ultra-conservative critics. Soon after coming to power in 1934 he was quick to introduce a bill to legalise hotel trading until 10pm.[84] Opponents of the bill in the Legislative Council branded Ogilvie a spokesman for the liquor interest. The bill failed but other legislation angered moralists in and out of Parliament. Bookmakers were allowed to bet on a wider range of sporting events and the film censorship structure established in 1917 was abolished, with federal controls taking over. The movie industry assured Ogilvie that improper films would not soil local minds.[85] Ogilvie loved to attack 'wowsers' whose 'desire seems to be to interfere with everyone's lawful joys and pleasures.'[86] In 1933, while in Opposition, some of Ogilvie's pet hates were encapsulated in an outburst he delivered on the priorities of the police force. He berated police for over-zealous activities connected to liquor licensing. Police had gone upstairs at a hotel and searched the bedrooms. They entered the licensee's room and searched under her bed in the presence of her husband. They had roused a female guest from her bath and searched visitors' rooms. According to Ogilvie this had taken place on a Sunday morning and the following day the visitors had packed up and returned to Melbourne in disgust. While this was being played out, an undetected murder had taken place in Hobart. The concentration of police on the Licensing Act was described by Ogilvie as a disgrace to the Government. This incident also spoke to another concern of Ogilvie about the value of tourism, something which was to become a standard-bearer of his later Premiership.[87]

Ogilvie's eventual triumph over relaxed licensing laws was a regular vehicle to attack the wowser element and score points. It was a coup for the Premier when the Legislative Council finally agreed to ten o'clock closing in November 1937. It was carried by just one vote.[88] This put Tasmania three decades ahead of Victoria, which endured the famous 'six o'clock swill' well into the late 1960s. A year after Tasmania had relaxed its laws, Ogilvie's

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[83] *Ibid.*
[84] *Ibid.*
[85] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 22.
[86] *Mercury,* 11 October 1934, p. 3.
[87] *Mercury,* 9 June 1933, p. 11.
[88] *Mercury,* 26 November 1937, p. 8.

opponents were still raging. MHA, Lord Mayor of Hobart and Chief Magistrate, John Soundy, a strong opponent of relaxed trading, was decrying Ogilvie's new laws and increased places to drink, predicting that there would soon be a hotel on every street corner. Ogilvie declared the debate illustrated how far persons 'filled with hypocrisy, bias and wowserism' were prepared to go to prejudice the discussion, accusing members of the Opposition of making deliberately inaccurate and untrue statements. Ogilvie suggested their case was so rotten that it had to be bolstered up with lies. Ogilvie accused Soundy of making untrue statements based on hearsay and that life in and around hotels was more civilised than in the past: 'The Commissioner of Police has reported that there was less drunkenness since ten o'clock closing than there had ever been in the history of the State.'[89]

Ogilvie's attitude towards those he deemed to be wowsers was constant, often bitter and sometimes amusing. Organisations and individuals who were convinced the cinemas were a breeding place for many evils targeted the Premier. In March 1936 Mrs M. L. Moore, secretary of the Good Film League, wrote to Ogilvie asking that he receive a delegation interested in establishing an approval board for films, in place of the national Censorship Board. Although her organisation acknowledged his efforts to suppress what they described as 'horror films', there was still a need to suppress certain films showing in Tasmania.[90] Ogilvie replied that the Commonwealth Censorship Board could adequately supervise such matters and it was not necessary to duplicate it for each state. He also assured her that when complaints occurred the State Government immediately called on Tasmanian cinema managers to 'eliminate' such pictures.[91]

Ogilvie tried hard to appease the more tender people of society on this issue. A few months later, after receiving complaints about a horror film *The Walking Dead,* Ogilvie wrote to Mr S. Burgess, manager of the Prince of Wales theatre in Hobart, reminding him that assurances had been received that such films would not be shown, yet this particular film had been shown in Queenstown. Ogilvie indicated that he could be forced to set up a local censorship board if the cinemas did not comply, especially in the showing of such films to children or adolescents.[92] The issue was not resolved immediately, but there must have been discussion of it inside and outside the Cabinet room and no doubt complaints from the more

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[89] *Ibid.*
[90] M. L. Moore to Ogilvie, March 3 1936. PD1/562, Vol 559. TAHO.
[91] Ogilvie to Moore, 7 March, 1936. PD1/562, Vol. 559. TAHO.
[92] Ogilvie to Burgess, 14 August 1936. PD1/562. Vol. 559. TAHO

'wowserish' of his constituents. Ogilvie wrote again to Burgess, in similar tone, on 23 October.[93] Later the same day, after a phone conversation with Burgess, Ogilvie wrote again about a film *The Black Room*, which he now understood could hardly be regarded as a horror film, to which his government objects. "We therefore raise no question as to the screening of this film, provided it is shown to adult audiences only,' Ogilvie wrote.[94] One can only imagine the anger of Ogilvie, as critics of the film probably had not seen the 'offending' film themselves, but had reacted to hearsay or misinformation.

The struggle between liberal Catholics like Ogilvie and the conservative, fundamentalism of his opponents was easy to understand, given the attitudes of the 1930s. A lighter example of where the fundamentalist and wowser champions stood came from the 1936 gathering of the Baptist Union Assembly in Melbourne. The President of the Council of Churches, the Rev S. E. Dorman, described all night and Sunday morning trams, about to be introduced in Melbourne, as an insidious evil: 'Think where your boys and girls will be if this thing happens,' he warned, 'you will not know where they are at any hour of the night.'[95] These trams must have been seen as leading young people astray. Other predicable warnings from the Assembly concerned the growing evil of gambling and the unlicensed sale of contraceptives, which were severely attacked.[96]

Closer to home, Ogilvie continued to stir up the moral guardians of Tasmania. The Women's Christian Temperance Union of Tasmania was a constant critic on issues of more liberal censorship and liquor laws, promoted by Ogilvie. In March 1936 the Union's secretary, E. R. Harry, wrote to Ogilvie urging more censorship of 'harmful films' and his quest to change the laws on six o'clock closing of hotels. She reminded Ogilvie of past deputations on this and other issues, on which Ogilvie had not acted.[97] Ogilvie's response was curt and short, replying two weeks later that 'these matters will receive consideration'.[98] Harry was not easily fobbed off. She had previously written about the dangers of allowing hotels to serve liquor with meals, declaring that her Union was 'resolved to support strenuously the six o'clock closing law and

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[93] Ogilvie to Burgess, 23 October 1936. PD1/562. Vol. 559. TAHO.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] *Mercury*, 14 October 1936, p. 9.
[96] *Mercury*, 14 October 1936, p. 9.
[97] Harry to Ogilvie, 26 March 1936, PD1/562. Vol 559. TAHO.
[98] Ogilvie to Harry, 7 April, 1936, PD1/562. Vol.559. TAHO.

we are strongly opposed to the weakening of this law by granting permission to sell alcoholic liquor with meals until 8pm, believing that this leads to much illicit drinking.[99]

Ogilvie's response, or lack of it, during the next few months, influenced the Union to bring in the big guns. The Australian Temperance Council's W. F. Finlayson wrote to Ogilvie, saying that these issues were of such concern that any changes to the liquor laws should be given over to the public in the form of a referendum.[100] Ogilvie, clearly frustrated and angry, replied on the same day, that members are elected to Parliament to represent the people and it was the responsibility of Parliament to decide on such issues. [101] The debate had stirred up Ogilvie and he penned an angry letter to Finlayson on 22 July, declaring that 'when we require your advice as to how we should administer the laws of this state we will seek it.' Ogilvie went on to deliver the knockout blow: 'In the meantime, I have to inform you that the Licensing Act is being administered to our complete satisfaction. Further, we have absolute confidence in the police force under whom the administration of this Act rests.[102] Two weeks passed and Ogilvie must have been hoping he had heard the last of the Australian Temperance Council. But a sarcastic response came from Finlayson on 8 August, which would have amused even the Premier. 'I desire to assure you that this Council appreciates the courteous nature of your reply to my letter conveying the resolution passed by the Council re the enforcement of licensing laws,' wrote Finlayson.[103]

Ogilvie's distaste for the killjoys did not abate. In 1937, on returning from another overseas trip, he met reporters in Sydney and delivered a verbal broadside at conservative Australia. 'Australians were a nation of wowsers and in many ways ten or fifteen years behind the rest of the world,' Ogilvie declared.[104] He described the liquor laws as absurd and that Sunday games of football and other sports should be encouraged. On this journey Ogilvie travelled without his wife and daughter. His itinerary included visits to the Pacific, with stops at Fiji and Samoa. He flew from San Francisco to New York and then by ship from Canada to Europe. Also on the agenda were visits to England, Scotland and continental Europe, visiting Munich, Paris, Salzburg, Vienna and Budapest. Ogilvie reported that it was a pleasure to be in Paris, which was even livelier than two years before. He enjoyed an international exhibition, a

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[99] Harry to Ogilvie, 14 March 1936.PD1/562. Vol. 559. TAHO.
[100] Finlayson to Ogilvie, 6 July 1936, PD1/562. Vol. 559. TAHO
[101] Ogilvie to Finlayson, 6 July 1936, PD1/562, Vol. 559. TAHO.
[102] Ogilvie to Finlayson, 22 July 1936. PD1/562. Vol. 559. TAHO.
[103] Finlayson to Ogilvie, 8 August 1936. PD1/562. Vol. 559. TAHO.
[104] *The Australian Worker,* (Sydney) 11 August 1937, p. 16.

tennis match and night clubs. He wondered what the people of Hobart would say of some of these shows, many of them only starting at midnight. [105] It is difficult to say what experiences led to his outburst about Australians being a bunch of wowsers and a decade behind the rest of the world. His remarks were welcomed by some Sydneysiders but not the New South Wales Deputy Premier, M. F. Bruxner. "If Mr Ogilvie wants to turn Tasmania into a cross between Coney Island and the Casino de Paris then we will be glad it is not on the mainland," Bruxner said.[106] There is a certain irony in these remarks as Tasmania was to introduce the nation's first legal casino in 1973 and Sydney was awash with illegal casinos and SP bookmakers at that time.

Ogilvie's relationship with the bureaucracy was fascinating. In an earlier chapter there are examples of how he was able to trump the Nationalist party about beginning the Tarraleah Hydro development through having an insider in the Public Service. His irritation with plodding bureaucrats has also been documented. Early in his Premiership, Ogilvie displayed these attitudes very publicly from the floor of the House of Assembly. He went in to bat for the quality public servants who had had their salaries stripped during tough economic times, while lambasting some sections of the Service. While speaking on a bill to amend the Public Service Act, Ogilvie said that hundreds of Public Servants were 'absolutely underpaid for their services', while others were 'absolute drones' not worth a quarter of the money they received. During the debate it was suggested that a classification system be introduced and Ogilvie agreed it may be the answer. In his usual style of impatience and confidence he declared such classification would come sooner than later: 'We hope to do in a year what our opponents failed to do in six.' [107]

Ogilvie proved to be a champion of education, as his commitment to abolishing high school fees, and other moves showed. For a boy educated in mostly private schools he displayed a firm commitment to education for all. Ogilvie's brother Eric served as Minister for Education and Albert took a special interest in public education. His daughter Pat attended St Mary's College. This was usual for a nominally Catholic family. But Ogilvie was always keen for a fight with the elitist, or Establishment, figures in education. Among those he took on was the headmaster of the Friends' School, Ernest Unwin, who chose the annual dinner of his

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[105] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 212.
[106] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* pp. 212-13
[107] *Mercury,* 30 October 1935, p.7

school's Old Scholars Association in 1937 to suggest that private schools were in for a bad time at the hands of the government led by Ogilvie.[108] The argument was mostly about perceived interference by the Government and Ogilvie, who was described by Unwin as its ruling autocrat. Unwin was reported as saying the success of the school in the past had been due to freedom from interference and outside control and that there had been no religious body or State control restricting the methods and aims: 'Now, however, State interference is creeping in.'[109]

Ogilvie was on the front foot, as usual, declaring that it was regrettable that Unwin, 'in his well-known hostility to the State Government, should permit himself to engage in these vague generalities and grossly unfair inferences which have no foundation in fact.'[110] The central theme of the argument was about which method of examination was most effective. Ogilvie favoured internal examinations for the Intermediate Certificate and had the backing of the Victorian Government, whose Director of Education had expressed the view that abolition of external exams in favour an internal system was the sounder method and the idea was recommended by nearly all progressive education authorities. Ogilvie said any inference that the Labor Government was mooting interference with the religious and educational methods was incorrect and that Unwin had read something into the party's policy which was not there, and had never been there. Ogilvie then went for the jugular, describing Unwin as out of touch with Government policy when he makes public statements which are entirely incorrect: "If anyone should be silent on the question of abolition of external examinations it is Mr Unwin, for while all other schools in the last Leaving Examination passed seventy-five candidates, Mr Unwin passed one.'[111]

Ogilvie's confrontation with the 'private' schools was typical of his style. Non-government schools had banded together under the banner of the Association of Public Schools, using the quaint British style of describing private or independent schools as public. Unwin was its secretary. At a meeting called to discuss the proposed abolition of Intermediate Examinations, Ogilvie was reported to have 'thumped the desk vigorously, told the meeting not to waste his time' and concluded that 'the Intermediate is gone.'[112] There was continuing

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[108] *Mercury*, 5 October 1935, p.9.
[109] *Mercury*, 5 October 1937, p. 9.
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] Derek Phillips, *Making More Adequate Provision: State Education in Tasmania, 1839-1985*, Hobart, 1985, pp. 196-7.

argument about the number of positions the APS should have in the Schools Board and other issues. In October 1937 while the controversy raged, Ogilvie threatened the APS with several actions, including the barring from public service employment of applicants who had attended a school that did not accept accrediting and internal examinations. Ogilvie later withdrew his threats and it was resolved to form a Schools Board with equal representation from Government and non-Government schools. At a subsequent meeting the APS representatives found Ogilvie 'uncompromisingly antagonistic.' The continuing bitterness resulted in the APS going its own way and the breach was deemed irreparable. Unwin issued a statement which said freedoms for his schools were not safeguarded and that the APS would set up its own board of secondary education and control the granting of certificates.[113] A month later the Catholic schools broke with the APS and adopted the Government system. By the end of 1938 the University of Tasmania had decided to discontinue the Intermediate examination.[114] William Oats, headmaster of the Friends' School from 1945-73, in typically Quaker style, puts a more positive stance on the confrontation in his history of the school. Oats writes that, despite the verbal exchanges, the lines of communication were kept open between Unwin and Ogilvie and that they continued to have conversations on the issue, despite their vastly differing views.[115] There were no real winners from this acrimonious encounter, but it demonstrates the forcefulness of Ogilvie's commitment to government education and a willingness, almost obsessively so, to stand up and antagonise his opponents, who would be seen as representative of the social Establishment of the time.

The human side to Ogilvie's commitment to education is well displayed in the life of historian and academic Barbara Hamilton-Arnold. She grew up at Wynyard in Tasmania's north-west in difficult circumstances. The family farm had been lost in the Great Depression and high school or tertiary education seemed impossible for Barbara and her siblings. Their father, reduced physically by the horrors of World War I, was forced to seek menial employment where he could, while the family struggled financially in rented accommodation. Both parents left school aged 12 and, despite their obvious intelligence and ability, the children seemed destined to be denied high school or tertiary education. The oldest boy, Brian, won a bursary which enabled him to attend Burnie High School. The chances of the second child, Audrey, getting a similar bursary or scholarship seemed slight, even though she was one of the

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[113] *Ibid.*
[114] *Ibid.*
[115] W. N. Oats, *The Rose and the Waratah: The Friends' School Hobart, Formation and Development 1832-1945*, Hobart, 1979, pp. 250-1.

brightest and best at Flowerdale State School in 1936. Their mother, Arabella, a feisty and strong woman, was not to be defeated. She took the train to Hobart to seek a meeting with Premier Ogilvie and his brother Eric, the Minister for Education. So impressed were the Ogilvie brothers with the case put forward by Mrs Hamilton that they intervened to provide a scholarship of ten shillings a week for board and £5 for books. Two years later, when Barbara was ready for high school, another letter went off to the Ogilvies and yet another scholarship was arranged. Part of the arrangement was that the high school year began with the family signing a contract, which was to be somewhat secretive, that details of the scholarship should not be widely broadcast. The intervention proved worthwhile as all three siblings matriculated, attended university and had successful careers. Brian became secretary of the Public Service Board in Canberra, Audrey became a physiotherapist and Barbara was offered a scholarship to attend the Sorbonne in Paris after graduating with honours in French. She was unable to take that opportunity, but had a long career as a senior librarian and lectured at RMIT for two decades. It is common to hear politicians claim a commitment to education, but Ogilvie had the runs on the board. [116]

From the beginning of his Premiership, Ogilvie's impatience, drive and work ethic rankled his more conservative opponents. Soon after his 1934 election victory his response to an old friend summed up his attitude and personality. Bill Scanlon, national secretary of the Australian Timberworkers' Union, wrote to congratulate Ogilvie. Scanlon wondered how Ogilvie would cope with those unwilling to change. Ogilvie agreed that many in Tasmania regarded him as too militant and many would wobble at his plans: 'However, I am in a perfectly independent position,' wrote Ogilvie, 'and I do not care whether I remain in office or not, and am certainly going to stand no nonsense from any of the weak-kneed section of the House.'[117] Ogilvie proudly boasted he had put back to work 600 men in nine days, wiped out fees for high school, abolished the Picture Censor Board and hoped to do a great deal more in the near future.[118] Ogilvie was equally pugnacious in reply to a letter from a Geeveston resident, slightly critical of action about the lack of jobs in his area: 'Do they expect us to turn Tasmania inside

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[116] This account is the result of a long conversation with Barbara Hamilton-Arnold on 19 October 2015. She is convinced that without the intervention of the Ogilvie brothers both she and her sister could not have contemplated even high school during the difficult post-Depression days. She believes there may have been many others helped by Ogilvie without great fanfare.

[117] Ogilvie to Bill Scanlon, 29 June 1934, PD8/1. TAHO.

[118] *Ibid.*

out in twenty-four hours, wrote Ogilvie, 'if so, well I am not the person who can do it.'[119] But Ogilvie pointed out the Minister for Lands had sent fifty men from Hobart to Dover to work, and when he informed Ogilvie of the large number of unemployed south of Geeveston he had agreed to do more. Ogilvie said he had sent 100 men to Osterley, fifty from Glenorchy and twenty-five from New Norfolk. Ogilvie conceded he could not put everyone back to work at once, but they would do their best.[120]

[119] Ogilvie to C. E. Stevenson, 29 June 1934, PD8/1. TAHO.
[120] *Ibid*.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## CHAMPION OF THE DISPOSSESSED?

This chapter explores the humanitarian works of Albert Ogilvie, while examining some inconsistencies in his attitude to those seeking asylum in Australia. Ogilvie's interventions on behalf of the downtrodden seem to be in keeping with his attitudes to the local Establishment. Any appraisal of the contribution to the community, local or worldwide, of a public person is fraught with difficulty. If Albert Ogilvie was the humanitarian his admirers believed him to be, it may be attributed to a world view of the plight of others gleaned from his travels. As Mark Twain puts it, 'travel is fatal to prejudice, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.'[1]

It would seem that travel contributed greatly to Ogilvie's view of the world and the plight of those experiencing the worst treatment possible from fellow humans in Europe. Before Ogilvie's extensive travels as Premier in 1935, he visited Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and India, while in Opposition in 1933, at his own expense. This period of travel presents an interesting paradox and, by today's standards something of an inconsistency, given his great empathy and service when Premier to the plight of Jewish refugees in Europe. We have the filmic images of Ogilvie's visits to the Taj Mahal and other picturesque sites in New Delhi and Kandy, along with signs of abject poverty. It is worth remembering that the Australia of the day had not yet emerged from the White Australia Policy and racism was everywhere. When interviewed on his return, Ogilvie said that, while he still admired Gandhi, the riots, filth and illiteracy of India demanded that self-government must wait.[2] This would have been a typical remark of the day, as if the plight of ordinary Indians was of their own making and colonialism was in no way to blame.

The origins of Ogilvie's commitment to the Jews is hard to pinpoint. It may have crystallised on his observations in Germany and Austria and in a chance meeting with a taxi

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[1] Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad/Roughing It*. 1869.
[2] Michael Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha: World-wise Tasmanians*, Hobart, 2008, p.12.

driver in Vienna. Ogilvie told of a day in Vienna when most of his official duties had been completed. He hired a car for a drive around the city to play the tourist by looking at some of the city's most beautiful sights. Their Jewish taxi driver provided the Ogilvie party with 'no small amount of merriment by his frequent attacks upon the Hitler regime in Germany and the Nazi influence that was arising in Austria.'[3] The driver showed more than usual bravery to speak out in such a way, given the emerging darkness which was descending on his people.

Michael Roe has examined in depth the question as to what motivated Ogilvie to become a champion of Jewish refugees, which appears to run counter to his background and religious circumstances. Catholics, in general, were often even more inclined to anti-Semitism than those from other religions. Moreover, Ogilvie was opposed to finance capitalism. Under his leadership Tasmania closed its doors to refugee doctors and dentists in 1937. There was general hostility to European immigrants from within the Labor Party, presumably because of concerns about unemployment in post-Depression years. Roe, following discussions with several Tasmanians, including former Agent-General in London, Alf White, speculates that Catholicism was cool towards Jews, but Freemasonry may have been warmer and Jimmy Ogilvie, Albert's father, was a Freemason, raising the possibility of paying homage to that connection.[4]

A good example of how a Hobartian could be a German immigrant, Jew, Freemason and successful businessman was Leo Susman, who died in 1903, when Ogilvie was a teenager. Susman was a Freemason for forty years. He was a leading Mason in the move to establish a Grand Lodge of Tasmania, which came into existence in 1890. Susman also played an active part in the small Jewish community in Hobart. He was well-read and articulate and a member of the Macquarie Debating Society, a non-sectarian literary society founded by a Congregational Minister, George Clark, in 1855. Susman was highly respected, a Justice of the Peace, and well able to straddle the religious and social barriers which sometimes prevailed.[5] Such ecumenical ideas sound like a good ideal for a budding humanitarian like Ogilvie. This idea is possible, but, as Albert hardly knew his father and grew up in the Catholic family of his stepfather Frank Westbrook, such Freemasonry influence seems unlikely. Perhaps we need to give Ogilvie the benefit of the doubt that he acted out of altruistic compassion.

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[3] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 134.
[4] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha,* p. 232.
[5] Rick Snell, `Leo Susman: German, Jew, merchant and Freemason of Hobart Town (1832-1903), in *A Few From Afar: Jewish Lives in Tasmania from 1804, eds* Peter and Ann Elias, Hobart, 2003, pp. 93-96.

Ogilvie's commitment to Jewish refugees cannot be faulted. It is one of those traits that marked him as unique in Tasmanian public life during the period between the two world wars.

It is, in many ways, typical of Ogilvie as a man apart from the herd, wanting to be different and seen as a visionary. He may have even regarded it as a way of poking at the flesh of political opponents. Paul Bartrop, who has studied Ogilvie's involvement in this issue, summarises Ogilvie's efforts as a challenge he could not turn down and that it was an urgent problem which seemed to genuinely touch his sensibilities: 'The history of Australian refugee immigration policy before 1939 has very little to recommend it,' writes Bartrop.[6] It was certainly a stance which marked Ogilvie as different:

> Albert George Ogilvie may well prove to be the only public office-bearer during this time who advocated refugee entry in spite of existing regulations or policy considerations. The main principles for which Ogilvie fought throughout his career sprang from the premise that no-one can remain an innocent bystander in the face of suffering. This was abundantly demonstrated in his activities on behalf of refugees from Nazism.[7]

Bartrop argues that there is abundant evidence in Australian Government records that the Department of the Interior, which was responsible for immigration, deliberately discriminated against Jewish refugees, who comprised the majority of alien applicants in the later 1930s. Ogilvie fought against this discrimination.[8]

Michael Roe has suggested that Ogilvie's commitment to Jewish refugees could have stemmed from his great respect for Melbourne lawyer Henry Cohen, who was a man most prominent in Victorian Jewish affairs. Ogilvie appears to have pursued about fifteen cases with great determination, succeeding in about ten. He had only a moral commitment to these refugees, as such immigration issues were the responsibility of the Commonwealth. But he did work tirelessly for Jewish refugees, constantly taking up the issue with Prime Ministers.[9]

Ogilvie's attitude to Jewish immigration may have sparked equally generous and humanitarian thoughts in those who supported him in life and followed him in death. Deputy Premier and Irish Catholic, Edmund Dwyer-Gray, had a brief reign of six months after

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[6] P. R. Bartrop, 'The Premier as Advocate: A. G. Ogilvie, Tasmania and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-39.' *Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Papers and Proceedings,* Vol. 35, No. 2, June 1988, p.49.
[7] Bartrop, 'The Premier as Advocate', p. 55.
[8] Bartrop, 'The Premier as Advocate', p. 50.
[9] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, pp.232-33.

Ogilvie's death. He became Treasurer in Robert Cosgrove's Cabinet which followed. In response to Jewish lobbying to take more immigrants, Dwyer-Gray was enthusiastic and added that Jews fall into the same category as other migrants. Despite his traditions as an Irish Catholic, he urged Jewish lobbyists to ignore the fact that many Labor leaders are Catholics: 'That does not mean, however, that they are against other faiths . . . How foolish, this anti-Semitism!'[10] Dwyer-Gray was patron of the Refugee Council after Ogilvie's death and in 1940 still held the position, with the Lord Mayor of Hobart, John Soundy, as its president. Soundy represented the Nationalists in the Denison electorate from 1925-46. This suggests a healthy cooperative approach. The Hobart branch of the Refugee Council was assisting between fifty and sixty families, mostly Jewish. Its secretary, F. A. Erskine, was hopeful of forming a branch in Launceston. Mrs Erskine said Council members in Hobart were doing a splendid job helping refugees. Contrary to popular belief, Jewish people were only allowed to bring a small amount of money to Australia. Members of the Refugee Council were active in assisting these refugees to find work.[11]

Several other schemes, sometimes impractical, were mooted as ways of settling Jews in Tasmania in the wartime years which followed Ogilvie's death and may have been regarded as a legacy of the now deceased Premier's efforts. James Blenkhorn, manager of a lime works at Railton, suggested a state-sponsored farm colony for Jewish youth. A fruit juice factory was also mooted. A highly ambitious idea was floated by Wallace Good, acting for a British company that claimed to have 40,000 acres on King Island in which to settle 400 Jewish families. Both the state and federal governments were interested, but not sufficiently so for the scheme to come to fruition.[12] In hindsight, the King Island scheme seems overly optimistic, but it was treated as serious at the time. Robert Cosgrove, Minister for Agriculture in the Ogilvie Government, was making investigations into the project and had consulted with the Federal Government in mid-1939. The proposal insisted that each applicant have previous agricultural experience and that they would undertake dairying and mixed farming. Those people would be required to provide capital of between £1000 and £1500. The refugees being proposed were mostly of 'Jewish extraction', who had been forced off their holdings in Germany and Austria.[13] Other similar schemes were being mooted as life for Jews in Europe became worse

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[10] Heidi Fixel, `The History of the Hobart Hebrew Congregation: Part 4, in *A Few From Afar*, eds Peter and Ann Elias, p. 160.

[11] *Examiner*, 4 September 1940, p. 3.

[12] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 234.

[13] *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13 May 1939, p. 7.

by the day. Two hundred Hungarian farmers, doctors and artisans of Jewish background were seeking to establish a community in Western Australia. They had approached the Western Australian Agent-General in London, Michael Troy, emphasising that they had capital. Troy responded that the scheme was impractical. He advised migration in small groups who would be welcome to take up some abandoned group settlements in the south-west of the state. [14]

The most bizarre of these schemes came in May 1942 when the eccentric Critchley Parker junior became obsessed with setting up a Jewish settlement in the almost uninhabited south-west of the state. Critchley Parker was born into a life of luxury in Melbourne. He fell in love with an older married woman, a Jewish journalist named Caroline Isaacson. When knowledge of possible Jewish extinction, by the Nazis, became known, he became involved in a grand scheme to establish a Jewish homeland in the remote Port Davey area. His plan included a centre for manufacturing, producing perfume, fancy goods, jewellery and furs. His utopian vision included dykes built by Dutch immigrants and German-style freeways to transport goods to Hobart, financed by profits from farming and mining. Sadly, Critchley Parker perished in the bush when he ran out of matches with which to light fires. The lone resident of the area, Charlie King, had agreed to rescue him if things went wrong but saw no fires to warn of such disaster.[15] The father of Critchley Parker had a strong connection with Albert Ogilvie and will appear in a later chapter of this thesis, which provides hints of where the eccentricity was bred.

Madeleine Ogilvie, Albert's great niece, is proud of her ancestor's record with refugees. Albert established the Tasmanian Council for Refugees in 1934 while Premier and Madeleine has followed in the family footsteps as a human rights lawyer, with special interest in asylum seekers and other refugees. "I am, in a sense, continuing the family tradition of swimming against the tide,' she said, referring to her commitment, which sometimes goes against party policy or the current interpretation of it.[16]

A commitment to humanitarian issues was evident in Ogilvie's formative years in the Labor Party and his legal training, and career, may have encouraged him to regard these issues as important. When he was Attorney-General in 1926 the party's policies on human rights were strongly held. The state conference of the ALP adopted many human rights issues into its platform. Among these were sickness benefits, accident, life, and unemployment benefits,

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[14] *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*, 15 May 1939, p. 6.
[15] www.oddhistory.com.au/guys-hill-ub/critchley-parker-junior. Accessed 20 August 2015.
[16] Conversation with Madeleine Ogilvie on 20 June 2015.

pensions for widows and orphans, state medical services, abolition of capital punishment, establishment of maternity homes, bush nursing schemes and homes for the treatment of inebriates.[17]

Attitudes to race were complicated, to say the least, in pre-war Australia. The ALP membership had mixed views on the desirability of immigration and of who should be encouraged to come. Albert Ogilvie was no exception. A long debate at the Tasmanian ALP conference in April 1939 ensued on this matter. The Smithton branch put forward a motion that Tasmania recommend to the national ALP conference that alien migration immediately cease.[18] The motion received little wholesale support as it seemed too drastic for most delegates. Some delegates indicated concerns about enclaves of immigrants being formed and there were recommendations that immigrants be compelled to adopt the 'Australian language' and conform to the Australian standard of living. There was sympathy from some delegates that refugees were a special case. C. E. Culley, a House of Assembly member, who represented the Confectioners Union, reminded members that it was ACTU policy to provide refugees with an opportunity to enter Australia and make a living. The New Norfolk branch was opposed to any form of migration until every man in Australia was in employment. Eric Reece, from the Australian Workers Union, later to be Tasmanian Premier, was not happy with the situation on the west coast where about 70 men were looking for work in the Mount Lyell works at Queenstown, while many Italians had jobs there. Reece said members of his organisation could hold down a job with any foreigner. He hoped the conference would do all in its power to prevent Southern Europeans coming to Tasmania and prejudicing the position of the Tasmanian worker.[19] There is a certain irony in Reece's arguments. He would later become a champion of the Hydro-Electric Commission, which employed thousands of migrants from Europe in the years after World War II.

References to Southern Europeans as undesirable immigrants seem to be directed at Italians and Greeks, who were to become part of the backbone of post-war immigration in Australia. Ogilvie shared these sentiments, which seem out of kilter with his humanitarian stance on Jews. Ogilvie told the conference that, from observations on his travels in Europe, he was 'convinced that some types of Southern Europeans were most undesirable immigrants,

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[17] *Advocate*, 26 February 1926, p. 2.
[18] *Examiner*, 22 April 1939, p.8.
[19] *Ibid*.

and if admitted, would undoubtedly reduce Australian living standards.'[20] On the other hand, he continued, Australia did need 'decent types' of migrants. 'In my opinion, we cannot hold Australia unless we increase our population,' he said. Ogilvie moved an amendment which required immigrants to speak English, have sufficient means to prevent the possibility of adding to the number of unemployed, and to comply with the laws and standards of the country. The amendment was carried without opposition.[21] Although unstated, the prevailing view in post-Depression working class Australia seems to have been about the threat to local jobs, but those with money, which meant Jews in particular, were welcome. We cannot be certain if these ideas motivated Ogilvie, or if it was just good pragmatic politics. But his commitment to the Jewish cause went far beyond duty and stamped his humanitarianism.

The battles over immigration raged through the 1930s and attitudes to immigration were usually to do with local unemployment and a gradually improving economy. There was hostility to any financially-assisted immigration. The Wall Street crash and the worldwide Great Depression plunged Australia into turmoil on so many issues. Michael Roe points out that migration issues remained salient in Australia, but in a negative way. Assisted migration virtually ended. More people left Australia than entered it during the early 1930s, a phenomenon unique in peace-time.[22]

In 1936 the Australian Natives' Association (ANA) was promoting the idea of huge numbers of immigrants from Northern Europe as a way to 'safeguard Australia's heritage' without lowering the living standards of Australian workers. Speakers at the Tasmanian ANA conference claimed that British and Nordic immigrants would be quickly absorbed into the community, becoming good citizens and wealth producers, ready and willing to take up arms in defence of Australian ideals and freedom loving institutions.[23] Earlier that year, Ogilvie left no doubts where his sympathies lay, declaring as 'ridiculous' the notion that the resumption of English migration to Australia be considered. Ogilvie would have known his stance would resonate with Tasmanian workers, with unemployment still high. Ogilvie's attitude to Britain, especially after his travels in Europe the previous year, may have influenced his views: 'It seems ridiculous to me that people should be brought from England to Australia and asked to settle in the country when our own unemployment problem has not yet been solved,' said

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[20] *Examiner,* 22 April 1939, p. 8.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] M. Roe, *Australia, Britain and Migration, 1915-1940: A Study of Desperate Hopes,* Cambridge, 1995. p. 139.
[23] *Mercury,* 14 April 1936, p. 3.

Ogilvie.[24] Ogilvie said the question was raised at the recent Empire conference in London, but was not persisted with, as it was realised that it would be futile to ask the Dominions to absorb migrants when they cannot find work for any of their own people.[25]

Among those pushing for more British migration to Australia was Lord Barnby, a director of Lloyds Bank in London. When visiting Adelaide and later Melbourne he described the prejudice that existed towards immigration as archaic and said the problem needed intelligent study and should be tackled in a thorough manner by the whole Commonwealth.[26] Lord Barnby said there appeared to be a feeling in Australia that organised labour was against immigration. He opined that such opposition was justified fifteen years ago, but conditions had changed and that Australia needed a bigger population, not only for national security but to provide a market for manufactured goods. What seemed like a good idea for a London banker carried little weight with Ogilvie, attempting to deal with unemployment in Tasmania. Prime Minister Lyons had indicated he intended to urge a resumption of immigration to Australia, but the Leader of the Federal Opposition, John Curtin, agreed with Ogilvie that a Labor Government would not agree to assisted migration, which had been demonstrated was neither good for Australia nor for potential migrants.[27]

By mid-1939, close to Ogilvie's death, the Federal Government was having a bit each way on refugee immigration. The Minister for the Interior, Senator Harry Foll, was at pains to inform the people that more than 50 per cent of refugees were Christians, rather than all Jews, and that immigrants were being carefully selected by the Government, which was 'resolutely opposed to mass settlings.'[28] The Minister said Christian organisations were playing their part in bringing them to Australia. He rebuffed criticism that standards were being lowered and the Government was taking steps to ensure that the labour market was not disturbed. The Minister's statement seemed to be an assurance that those of anti-Semitic attitudes could relax and that Jewish enclaves would not exist. The Minister added that correspondence had passed between the Federal Government and the Tasmanian Government about the proposal to settle refugees on King Island, a scheme he said was far too nebulous for comment.[29] Sadly, Ogilvie was dead

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[24] *Mercury*, 14 April 1936, p.3.
[25] *Mercury*, 14 January 1936, p. 7.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Mercury*, 24 May 1939, p.7.
[29] *Ibid.*

within three weeks of this statement and we will never know if he may have driven it to fruition, especially as the clouds of war were looming in Europe.

Attitudes to non-British immigration were understandable, given the background and history of the nineteenth century, where the White Australia Policy had its birth. In the post-Gold Rush period it was aimed mainly at Chinese, whose numbers had been effectively reduced by 1901. By the 1920s there was hardly a trickle of non-British immigrants, despite 300,000 mostly assisted immigrants arriving. By the time the affluent 1920s had morphed into the Great Depression of the 1930s a fear of immigrants taking jobs from Australians, and prepared to work for lower wages, had emerged. Wendy Lowenstein and Morag Loh argue that the racist language of the day, with insults such as 'chow, nigger and dago', echoed late into the twentieth century. It was more than the fear of strangers in a large land, peopled by white men and women, and surrounded by people of an alien culture. The labour movement had always been at the forefront of campaigns to restrict migration.[30]

The idea that southern Europeans posed a threat to working-class Australians in general appears to make no sense in modern thinking. But anecdotally in my own lifetime such notions abounded, that Italians and Greeks were somehow not quite white people. Influential newspapers and magazines in the period between the two world wars, such as the *Bulletin* and *Smith's Weekly*, often fostered rabid xenophobia. The latter publication, in 1926, opined that Italians were a 'dirty Dago pest' and described as 'that greasy flood of Mediterranean scum that seeks to defile and debase Australia.'[31] The most damning of accusations by working class Australians was that Italians sold their labour cheaply or were scabs.[32] These racial hatreds sometimes led to violence. In Kalgoorlie in January 1934 a fight between an Italian barman and a local miner, resulted in the miner being felled. He hit his head on concrete and died. On Australia Day the local population retaliated in a rampage against all Southern Europeans. A bloody battle ensued, raging over two days, with Southern Europeans defending their homes with rifles and knives. The riot resulted in another death, this time of a man from Montenegro.[33]

Given the extraordinary times of the 1930s it is not so surprising that a man like Ogilvie, although kindness personified in his attitude to Jews, may have been less sympathetic to Southern Europeans. Ogilvie's rhetoric may not have been as hostile as others in the labour

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[30] Wendy Lowenstein and Morag Loh, *The Immigrants*, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 6-8.
[31] Gianfranco Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia*, Port Melbourne, 2003, pp. 56-7.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants 1788-1978*, Sydney, 1980, pp. 118-9.

movement, but it would not have been good politics to have been seen to be welcoming the Italians and Greeks too warmly in the post-Depression period when unemployment was still uncomfortably high. In 1937-8 the Australian Jewish Welfare Society tried to sponsor about 6,000 European Jews to enter Australia. Permission was granted to only those Jews with substantial capital or to those whose trade or profession would prove valuable to the nation and where immigrants would not be taking jobs off Australians. According to Phillip Knightley there was an additional requirement that applicants had to be of the 'right type'. Although not spelt out, it was felt to be a reference to the White Australia Policy: 'It was all right for the migrant to be Jewish but he or she should not be too swarthy.'[34]

It is understandable that during the worst years of the Great Depression anti-immigration sentiments were rife. Even British potential migrants were increasingly unwelcome. How much worse would the prospects be for Southern Europeans? Prime Minister Scullin, elected in 1929, was the son of Irish immigrants. Scullin's Australian patriotism was honed on World War One issues such as conscription, the Easter Uprising in Ireland and the divisive world of labour politics. During the 1920s he had criticised the policy of 'Empire immigration' as likely to worsen unemployment in Australia. One of his first acts as Prime Minister was to abolish the scheme of government assistance for British immigrants. As a result the number of British migrants fell from 13,000 in 1929 to 2,700 in 1930 and 175 by 1932.[35] It was hardly surprising that Ogilvie would be of like mind. Even several years later when he came to power Ogilvie was supporting work for dole projects such as the Mount Wellington road and working feverishly to get locals back to work.

Finding a balance between his humanitarian commitments to Jews, while seeking to get Tasmanians back to work, was difficult. Ogilvie seems overly pragmatic on some issues. In late 1937, the House of Assembly was encouraged to amend the Medical Act to restrict doctors practising in Tasmania to be only British subjects. Press headlines suggested a fear of an influx into Tasmania.[36] Ogilvie said the Medical Council in Tasmania had given him the names of fourteen German-Jewish doctors who had applied for registration, and the council feared that a recent Victorian case, when an individual was successful on appeal, made the situation precarious for Tasmania. Part of the amendment was to give the Medical Council discretion.

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[34] Phillip Knightley, *Australia: A Biography of a Nation*, London, 2000, p. 160.
[35] Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants*, pp. 112-13.
[36] *Mercury*, 18 November 1937, p. 6.

Opposition Leader H. S. Baker said in past years German doctors, presumably Jewish, had moved to Edinburgh to obtain their degrees. Debate was adjourned with Premier Ogilvie saying he needed more time to look into the matter. [37] The following day the bill was amended, giving the Medical Council the power to refuse registration of German/Jewish doctors. Ogilvie said, after making enquiries on several points, the bill was satisfactory in its present state.[38] Just a few weeks before Ogilvie stated that he had no fear about finding suitable doctors for his public health scheme. He would go to mainland Australia, even to England. If necessary he would bring Jewish doctors who had been exiled from Germany to Tasmania. Ogilvie was speaking in Auckland on the way home from an Imperial Conference in London.[39] Just three days later Ogilvie was singing a different tune and may have regretted his Auckland outburst. He did not speak of being misquoted, but described the report that he was keen to 'get hold of Jewish doctors' as utter rubbish: 'The scheme will start on January, when twelve doctors will be stationed in country areas.' Ogilvie said. 'If there should be a shortage of doctors in Tasmania, or if the doctors there are unwilling to work under the scheme, we will bring doctors from the mainland.'[40]

Individual or group migration from Europe was always a difficult issue. Many people saw Australia as a highly desirable destination, especially as war threatened in Europe and post-Depression economic factors prevailed. In 1936 large groups of Swiss were looking for a happier and more secure life. A deputation was made to the Tasmanian Agent-General in London to relocate 200 Swiss nationals to Tasmania. The acting Agent General, Herbert Ely, wrote to Ogilvie on behalf of the Swiss group. Ely recommended the Swiss as accustomed to hard work, thrifty of habits and that they would make excellent settlers. But he had doubts about whether Tasmania could accommodate them in 'group settlements' and asked for Ogilvie's opinion.[41] Ogilvie seemed to have an open mind on the matter. He replied that previous ideas for group settlements had not been very encouraging, but he would wait on further developments.[42] Prime Minister Joe Lyons entered the discussion after being approached by the potential immigrants. Lyons quoted figures, which had come from the group

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[37] *Mercury*, 18 November 1937, p. 6.
[38] *Examiner*, 19 November 1937, p. 8.
[39] *Mercury*, 7 August 1937, p.13.
[40] *Advocate*, 10 August 1937, p.7.
[41] Ely to Ogilvie, 8 April 1936. PD1/552/Vol 549. Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.
[42] Ogilvie to Ely, 1 June 1936. PD1/552/Vol. 549. TAHO.

that each family would bring about £400. Lyons asked Ogilvie's opinion if Tasmania could be a desirable place for such a group settlement.[43] Given their lasting feud it may be possible that Ogilvie was reluctant to go along with any scheme which seemed to be endorsed by Lyons. Ogilvie responded to Lyons more than two months later, indicating he did not want to get involved. There were many difficulties, including the requirement of large areas of land. Ogilvie said the Tasmanian Government was not in a position to establish a group settlement for Swiss families.[44]

By early 1939 Ogilvie was advocating more European migration to Tasmania. Again, it was the attraction of well-educated and successful refugees, rather than British migrants Ogilvie was supporting. A report from the London-based Czech Refugee Committee indicated that eight former German industrialists were anxious to 'refound' their industries in England and the Dominions.[45] It is assumed that these industrialists were Jewish, or had other good reasons for fleeing Nazi Germany. Ogilvie was enthusiastic at the prospect. It would provide expert labour, machinery and some small capital. Ogilvie declared the lack of skilled labour in Tasmania was appalling. Although it was a matter for the Federal Government to decide, Ogilvie said as far the Tasmanian Government was concerned any move which meant the introduction of a skilled staff and the foundation of a new industry would be strongly supported. Ogilvie added that he had received direct inquiries from Czechoslovakia on the proposal. [46] Although it sounds like a change of heart from a few years earlier it was consistent with Ogilvie's push for increased industrialisation in Tasmania and his search for more industry to justify the need for hydro-electric power. This will be included in a later chapter on Ogilvie's vision for Tasmania.

Just two months after Ogilvie's death, the plight of refugees was the headline-grabbing item for debate at the Tasmanian Anglican Synod. Ogilvie's work on behalf of refugees must have been present, to some degree, in debates at the Synod. Canon W. R. Barrett stirred controversy by declaring that, as members of the British Empire, Australians were partly to blame for the plight of refugees. Canon Barrett said it made him ashamed to call himself British

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[43] Lyons to Ogilvie, 1 June 1936. PD1/552/Vol. 549. TAHO.
[44] Ogilvie to Lyons, 5 August 1936. PD1/552/Vol. 549. TAHO.
[45] *Advocate*, 12 January 1939, p. 2.
[46] *Ibid*.

to think of the way in which those of the Empire had retreated step by step before the aggressor: 'I am thankful to God that at last they have determined to make a stand.'[47] Canon Barrett received support for his motion that the Church should be doing more to recognise the plight of refugees and work to establish suitable refugees in Tasmania and to cooperate with other organisations formed for a similar purpose. He said it was unbelievable that 'in the twentieth century we should find people persecuted because of their political opinions and hounded to death because of their race.' Canon Barrett said it was because of the cowardice of democratic nations in failing to take a stand soon enough that thousands of people in Europe were homeless. It was the duty of the Church to do all it could to help human beings in distress.

Among those taking offence at Canon Barrett's remarks was Frank Marriott (MHA) who resented use of the word 'cowardice' in referring to the British people, who added that there were already organisations in the state helping refugees and there was great suffering already among local people.[48] Marriott was an English-born Nationalist Party member. He lost his sight while fighting in World War I and needed the assistance of his wife to read bills and other parliamentary business. He was a formidable patriot and Empire loyalist. Canon Barrett responded that the 'plight of our own people does not excuse us from this other work.'[49]

Closer to home there is good evidence that Ogilvie's humanitarian attitudes bore fruit for those in genuine need. Times were tough in the post-Depression years and politicians were seen as doing better than most. In his first period in office, Ogilvie was inundated with letters seeking support for sporting clubs and community groups, but he appears to have had his priorities right. In a letter to the secretary of the Tyenna Cricket Club, which had solicited a donation from Ogilvie, he replied that only the day before he had responded to a rival cricket club, playing in the same competition.[50] He had been contacted by more than 100 organisations, ranging from football and badminton clubs to regattas and fairs. Ogilvie wrote that he found it utterly impossible to give to them all from his meagre salary of £3 10s a week. Ogilvie's salary was smaller than most as he declined to take a Ministry, although supervising all of them. Ogilvie said he hoped the cricket club would understand it was impossible to donate anything, except to charitable causes, and these are heavy enough.[51]

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[47] *Mercury,* 31 August 1939, p.12.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] Ogilvie to F. G. Miller, 13 November 1934. PD8/1. TAHO.
[51] *Ibid.*

A few weeks later Ogilvie wrote to the Unemployed Social Movement enclosing a cheque for £1 -1s- 0. Ogilvie explained that demands on his private purse were 'numerous and consistent, otherwise it may have been possible to make the amount a little larger.' [52] The Unemployed Social Movement had a highly socialistic agenda, which would be considered radical by conservative voices then and now. Its published objectives included a state insurance scheme against unemployment, sickness and old age, at a standard which shall not be lower than that enjoyed by the individual's useful service to society. It also favoured taxation of unearned and investment incomes at rates which will prevent such incomes hindering social progress and the reduction of inheritance to a level that will make for a wider distribution of wealth and prevent its control getting into the hands of a few. The movement also favoured putting professions such as the medical profession, under state control. The overall objective was to favour a 'broad human objective of intelligent effort for progressive social welfare, meeting the evils of the present with a recognition that the earth is the common heritage of the whole of the human race.'[53]

Ogilvie's donation to the movement suggests he was as committed to the ideals of socialism, as he had been before winning high office. He was understandably less generous in response to a plea to help a young lady win the Carnival Queen fundraising event for the Roman Catholic Church at Pioneer. In a letter from Mrs Ray Steel she indicated she would love her girl to be crowned Queen of Queens.[54] She reminded the new Premier that she had always done everything in her power help the 'Labor people' to go to the top of the poll and she thought Ogilvie or his friends may like to help her daughter to be top of the poll in this carnival.[55] Ogilvie responded in the usual polite way, reminding Mrs Steel that he was as strapped for funds as most.[56] By this time Ogilvie was far too busy to take legal briefs, unlike his previous years in the Parliament, which would supplement his Parliamentary salary.

Ogilvie demonstrated similar humanitarian concerns when dealing with money from the public purse. He organised an increased grant to the Salvation Army's Maternity Home in Hobart, which had been finding it extremely difficult to maintain its services. It had thirty-four young women being helped while there was really only enough room for twenty-eight. The

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[52] Ogilvie to Bill White, Secretary, Unemployed Social Movement, 16 October 1934, PD8/1. TAHO.
[53] *Voice*, 11 August 1934, p. 6.
[54] Mrs Ray Steel to Ogilvie, 18 August 1934, PD8/1. TAHO.
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] Ogilvie to Steel, 25 August 1934, PD8/1. TAHO.

matron indicated that £180 would give them a lot of scope which could not have been done with a smaller grant. She praised Ogilvie and recognised his grasp of the position in relation to the 'social reform of Tasmania'.[57] This certainly spoke to a genuine concern by Ogilvie to help those in dire circumstances, as there were probably no votes in the plight of unmarried mothers.

Ogilvie had a champion in Jack Crowe, one of the most colourful and humanitarian men to emerge on Tasmania's north-west coast. Crowe was well known under the pen-name of 'The Wild Irishman.' Crowe spent more than forty years in voluntary work with sporting organisations, hospitals, churches, the Red Cross and various other humanitarian causes. He was reported to have raised many thousands of pounds for charity, including £2000 for Red Cross during World War I.[58] Crowe supported the 40-hour week and earlier retirement for manual workers and public servants so they may make way for younger unemployed. Crowe was an unabashed supporter of the Labor Party and was devoted to helping out the working class. He was loud in his praise of the Ogilvie Government for its work in the post-Depression period, including Ogilvie's introduction of free high schools and job creation.[59]

At the time of Ogilvie's death, when tributes were flowing from on high, it is worth considering a letter to the editor of the *Advocate* newspaper from Crowe, under his *nom de plume* of 'The Wild Irishman.'[60] He stated that with the death of Ogilvie the Labor Party sustained the greatest loss in its history. Crowe went on to recall anecdotes such as a visit to Burnie by the Premier when things were at their worst and Crowe was organising help for the unemployed. Along with two friends Crowe discovered Ogilvie near the Burnie Council Chambers while on an official visit to the town. Crowe said he was feeling a bit embarrassed and insignificant, but he breasted up to Ogilvie and stated his case about the desperate times being encountered. Ogilvie made Crowe and his men feel at home, shouted them a meal and a drink or two at a nearby pub. Buoyed by their reception, and the beer, they told the Premier something needs to be done. Ogilvie told them something would be done and, in less than a fortnight, work was found for over 100 of the unemployed at Burnie, and for thousands all over Tasmania. Crowe added that the Premier would not let them leave without half an hour's chat over the general conditions on the north-west coast. Crowe quoted one of his mates as saying,

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[57] A Jackson, Matron of the Salvation Army Maternity Home in Hobart to Ogilvie, 24 September 1934, PD8/1. TAHO.
[58] *Advocate*, 25 May 1946, p. 9.
[59] *Advocate*, 27 January 1937, p. 5.
[60] *Ibid*.

'that man [Ogilvie] couldn't be flash if he tried.'[61] Those words, from working-class men, probably said more about Ogilvie's humanity than all the epitaphs from the political, legal and ecclesiastical world. It also probably explains why Ogilvie was so successful at the ballot box in a time when television and modern media were not a factor, but straight talk and action, along with face-to-face experience, were important and common folk could more easily cut through the spin and weasel words we have come to expect in the twenty-first century.

[61] *Advocate*, 14 June 1939, p. 9.

# CHAPTER SIX

## VISIONARY PREMIER

It is not difficult to make an argument for Albert Ogilvie as a visionary leader, maybe well ahead of his time in ideas and policies. The focus of this chapter will be on the many innovative ways in which he began to reshape Tasmanian attitudes and promote change. I would argue that his desire to pinprick the forces of conservatism and outdated thinking remained until his untimely death, and that Tasmania reaped the benefits of his foresight for several decades which followed. How we measure the achievements of a public man or woman is a matter worth debate. It is often argued that a successful premier or prime minister is judged on how well the economy was managed during that regime. Others may be more impressed with social welfare and human rights improvements and a genuine vision to take a state or nation to a more humane and respected status in the eyes of the world. It could be argued that Ogilvie succeeded at all levels. It is well summed up in his own words. Ogilvie claimed that his major achievement was the 'shedding of Tasmania's inferiority complex.'[1] Professor of Psychology, Morris Miller claimed, at Ogilvie's death, that the Premier had 'demolished signs of ancient days and aroused a modern outlook.'[2]

The promotion of the Hydro-Electric Commission, especially the construction of the Tarraleah Power Scheme, during the 1934 election campaign, remains one of Ogilvie's triumphs and encouraged badly-needed industrialisation to the state, along with job creation. Arguments about whose idea it was have been documented in an earlier chapter, in which the Nationalist Party accused Ogilvie of stealing its idea and there were allegations that a Labor-friendly 'spy' within the Commission leaked the Government plans for the Tarraleah scheme to Ogilvie. No matter who took the credit, the scheme was started immediately after Ogilvie took power in 1934 and is regarded as an act of great vision by any standards. Ogilvie's policy speech ahead of the 1934 election promised something for everyone, including restored wages for public servants, police and teachers, abolition of state school fees and introducing grants to small farmers and reduced bank interest rates. Roger Lupton, author of a history of Tasmanian hydro power, argues that above all these promises it was Ogilvie's championing of economic

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[1] Michael Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha: World-wise Tasmanians*, Hobart, Hobart, 2008, p.239.
[2] *Ibid*.

development, job creation and the possibilities attached to hydro power which fired the enthusiasm of the electorate.[3]

In a memoir centred around the political history of Tasmanian power development, former Premier Doug Lowe devotes a chapter to Ogilvie's vision, intellect and insatiable appetite for knowledge, under the heading 'Legacy of Genius.' Lowe argues that Ogilvie provided a form of inspirational dynamism not seen previously in a Tasmanian leader. In addition to providing short-term programs to relieve the poverty-stricken victims of the Depression, Ogilvie outlined the importance of providing infrastructure for future development of the state's natural resources. 'An integral part of the forward development strategy, indeed a major focal point, was the development of a rapidly expanding hydro-electric program,' writes Lowe: 'The Hydro-Electric Commission became one of Premier Ogilvie's major vehicles of state development.' [4] The promotion of hydro-electricity as a means of attracting heavy industry to Tasmania has been generally accepted as visionary. Quentin Beresford credits Ogilvie's vision to harness such a power source as right for the time. He writes that Ogilvie's goal was to create in Tasmania a Ruhr Valley of Australia. Ogilvie's travels to Europe in 1935 may have planted such seeds in his mind.[5]

The Tarraleah project was typical of the frenzied activity during the Ogilvie years. The Hydro-Electric Commission workforce numbered between 800 and 1500 at various times, although there was a shortage of skilled designers and draughtsmen.[6] With the beginning of new industries, the Commission was hard pressed to supply enough power. The project was developed in tandem with road-building projects. Apart from the Mount Wellington pinnacle road, the Ogilvie Government pushed on with roads to Hastings, Cradle Mountain, Lake St Clair, from Waratah to the Pieman River and Queenstown to Strahan, along with several others. In 1936 there was a fall in unemployment of 24 per cent in urban areas and 36 per cent in rural areas.[7] Hydro villages at Tarraleah, Bronte Park and later Wayatinah became mini-boom towns and continued to soak up unemployment. There was work in Hydro towns for everyone who

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[3] Roger Lupton, *Lifeblood: Tasmania's Hydro Power*, Edgecliff, 1997, p. 115.
[4] Doug Lowe, *The Price of Power: The Politics Behind the Tasmanian Dams Case*, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 2-4.
[5] Quentin Beresford, *The Rise and Fall of Gunns Ltd*, Sydney, 2015, p. 4.
[6] W.A. Townsley, *Tasmania from Colony to Statehood 1803-1945*, Hobart, 1991, p. 360.
[7] Townsley, *Tasmania: From Colony to Statehood*, p. 360.

wanted it by the immediate post-World War II period and workers and their offspring in villages all found employment.[8]

In the twenty-first century, and with hindsight, a passion for tourism does not seem particularly visionary. The industry is enjoying the success it only dreamed of a decade or two ago. But when Ogilvie was trumpeting tourism as one of the major panaceas for growth in the post-Depression years, it was significantly visionary. Ogilvie's passion for his home state and a wish to share it with visitors runs through much of his political and private life. A month before his death, Ogilvie issued a press release extolling the value of tourism to the state. The value of tourism to Tasmania had been estimated at £850,000. But Ogilvie predicted that if tourism was properly developed, it should come to be worth between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000. Ogilvie said that efficiently fostered, and with the backing of the whole community, he thought 'the tourist business should be in a very few years' time our greatest asset.'[9] Marian Walker suggests that even Ogilvie's predictions would have astounded him in the twenty-first century. In 2006 tourism contributed $900 million to the economy, comprising 2400 separate businesses and providing 22,900 jobs, nearly nine percent of Tasmanian employment.[10] The industry has continued to boom in the decade which followed. Ogilvie did not invent the slogan 'The Switzerland of the South' but probably wished he had. The famous tourism group, Thomas Cook and Sons, first came up with it when singing the praises of Tasmania in 1894 and others had made similar comparisons before 1900.[11]

Ogilvie's attitude to tourism as an economic panacea may have gone back to his days representing the tourism industry during his legal career. It was clearly a big issue for him in the build up to the 1934 election. He saw it as a strategy to overcome the Great Depression, in the same way as road-building was promoted to soak up unemployment. During the election campaign the themes promoted by Ogilvie were finance, land and income tax, trans-Derwent communications, the transport and tourism industries and the railways.[12] Michael Roe suggests

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[8] My school years were spent in Hydro villages at Bronte Park and Wayatinah, beginning in 1950. From highly-skilled engineers to illiterate road workers and tradesmen all found work, along with huge numbers of European immigrants during the post-war immigration boom.

[9] Marian Walker, `The Switzerland of the South?: Thomas Cook and the Institutionalisation of Tourism in Late Nineteenth Century Tasmania, *Tasmanian Historical Studies,* Vol. 13, 2008, p. 63.

[10] Walker, `The Switzerland of the South?' p. 63.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] Marian Walker, 'Memories, Dreams and Inventions: The Evolution of Tasmania's Tourism Image 1803-1939', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Tasmania, 2008, p. 365.

that Ogilvie's vision was so wide-ranging that some called him an F. D. Roosevelt in his scale.[13] The spectacular advancement of the state in the latter part of the 1930s has been attributed to Ogilvie's personal resilience and a mix of progressivism, pragmatism and opportunism. 'Ogilvie set out in his inimitable style', writes Walker, 'to further the image of Tasmania as a progressive, respectable cohesive community and to match this image as far as possible with supportive tourism initiatives.'[14]

Tasmanian tourism had an unusual champion from outside the state in newspaper proprietor and publisher Critchley Parker. Parker's son, of the same name, appears in an earlier chapter as the eccentric entrepreneur who was keen to establish a Jewish community in Tasmania's south-west, but died of exposure when doing reconnaissance work in the bush. Critchley Parker senior frequently eulogised the history, beauty and potential of the island state. He published an impressive volume in 1937, entitled *Tasmania: The Jewel of the Commonwealth.* The book sold for a very low price of sixpence and was published 'with the authority of the Tasmanian Government.'[15] It promoted a wide range of Tasmanian features, including tourism, hydro power development, history, mining, nature and fishing, a favourite theme of Parker's and a sport he loved. Critchley Parker's flowery and persuasive prose could not fail to impress those contemplating a visit to the island. 'Undoubtedly it is a tourist's paradise . . . . lovely pictures are presented of delightful beauty spots where hills glow and the lambent sea whispers and all the full world rolls in a rhythm of praise,' wrote Parker: 'all that is typical in sight, sound and scent may be seen in this favoured state, whence one is impressed also by the feeling of limitless beyonds of sea and land, and the sense of man's inseparable union in the whole.'[16] Among other slogans published in praise of Tasmania were: 'Tasmania – The precious stone set in the silver sea,' and: 'Tasmania – The state that will renew your youth.' It is not difficult to assume that Ogilvie and Parker would become partners in their passion for a tourism-inspired future for Tasmania.[17]

Ogilvie was relentless in his drive to promote Tasmania through tourism with both traditional and modern ideas. While in London in 1935 he visited the head offices of P & O and the Orient Steamship companies and succeeded in persuading both shipping companies to

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[13] Michael Roe, 'Ogilvie, Albert George (1890-1939)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Vol. 11, Melbourne, 1998, pp.68-70.
[14] Walker, Memories, Dreams and Inventions, pp, 365-6.
[15] Critchley Parker, *Tasmania: The Jewel of the Commonwealth*, Melbourne, 1937, pp.2, 36.
[16] *Ibid*
[17] *Ibid.*

call at Tasmanian ports during the tourist season. As he stepped off the boat back home, he branded Tasmanian publicity in England as 'hopelessly out of date' and recommended what steps should be taken to advertise Tasmanian products and tourist resorts. Among the necessary steps should be the use of broadcasting stations, cinema advertising and continuous changing of displays at Australia House in The Strand. Above all, he advocated an advertising campaign to coincide with the first shipment of apples each year and putting pressure on the Australian Trade Publicity Department to show 'at least some of the originality and capacity shown by New Zealand and South Australia.'[18] Ogilvie travelled to Melbourne in November to personally open the revamped Tasmanian Tourist Bureau in the city. An improved office site in Sydney followed, along with a new office in Perth to take advantage of passing coastal steamer tourist traffic. It was also made possible for overseas and interstate passengers to book direct from Fremantle to Burnie or Hobart on mail boats. These mail steamers carried approximately 6,000 passengers to Tasmania during the 1935 summer season.[19]

Critchley Parker had long been an advocate of Tasmania. As far back as 1899 he proclaimed himself an authority on fishing in the central highlands lakes. He published a pamphlet entitled, *Record of fish killed at Great Lake*.[20] The state had already benefited from Parker's love of Tasmania and angling, along with his media savvy. In 1925 he had written to Premier Joe Lyons saying that 'I am inclined to think one or two successful fishing days at the Great Lake on the moving screen displayed in England would, very materially, help your Tourist Department in Tasmania.'[21] Lyons took up the offer with great enthusiasm. Parker travelled to Tasmania in February 1926 to assist in the production. Five films resulted and were shown in 300 cinemas across Australia in a 'Know Your Own Country' series. Ogilvie would have known Parker at this stage as he was then Attorney-General in the Lyons Government.[22] Parker's passion for all things Tasmanian must have been a great joy to Ogilvie. While he was attempting to drag conservative Tasmanians towards his forward-thinking, here was a Melbourne-based publisher who loved the state as much as Ogilvie.

Ogilvie's vision for a hydro-electric and tourism based future for Tasmania were firmly in place in 1934, the first year of his premiership. These big ticket items seem to dominate our

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[18] *Mercury*, 29 August 1935, p.6.
[19] Walker, 'Memories, Dreams and Inventions', pp. 369-371.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.* p. 284.

perceptions of the Premier, but many other ideas and ambitions place him well ahead of his time. For example, four decades before the Whitlam Federal Government, Ogilvie mooted no-fault divorce. [23] Equally controversial measures mentioned previously, such as abolition of the state governor, the Legislative Council and other issues appear to have a republican and anti-British flavour. It is ironic that he was born at the Victoria Tavern in Hobart, named for Queen Victoria, and advertised to this day on its frontage as a 'British hotel', complete with crown and similar emblems. The hotel was originally licensed in 1839, two years after Queen Victoria began her long reign.[24]

Ogilvie stayed true to himself and his political party on the complex issues of King and country. A Royal visit by Henry, Duke of Gloucester, in 1934, was reported to be a great success. Ogilvie would have performed his duties politely, despite his dislike of Royalty and many things British. The Duke had a reputation for insobriety and was unloved by most in the Labor Party. He later became Governor-General of Australia from 1945 to 1947, amid criticism from many in the Labor Party, including future leader Arthur Calwell, who warned of his poor reputation ahead of his appointment.[25] Ogilvie had been lobbied by a Tasmanian politician, named Harold, whose surname cannot be found, keen to seek Imperial honours, not long after the Duke's visit. Ogilvie replied that he doubted he could do anything for this clearly monarchist fellow: 'As you know, the recommendation of political honours in very much opposed by the people I represent,' Ogilvie wrote, 'With regard to the Duke, the least said the better.'[26] This left very little doubt what Ogilvie thought of the Royal visitor. Ogilvie's critics could argue an inconsistency in his attitude to Royalty and British honours. He was very proud to have been a King's Counsel. Cynics may argue that it was a way of asking for higher legal fees. His daughter Pat twice presented bouquets to Royal visitors, but this would have been accepted protocol for the Premier of the day.

In 1924, long before his rise to Premier, Ogilvie came close to creating legal history with a bid dramatically to change the divorce laws. Henry Finlay writes that it was the first attempt at something approaching consent divorce for any Australian jurisdiction. The then Attorney-General's proposed legislation would allow separation by mutual consent if the

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[23] Henry Finlay, *To Have but not to Hold,* Leichhardt, 2005, pp.279-80.

[24] Signage outside the current hotel in Murray Street indicates the hotel was first licensed in 1835. It presumably operated under a different name until 1839 when Queen Victoria had begun her reign.

[25] C. Cunneen, `Gloucester, first Duke of (1900-1974), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 14, Melbourne, 1996, pp.2-3.

[26] Ogilvie to 'Harold', 26 November 1934, PD8/5 Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.

parties were living apart for three years and that it was in the best interests of the parties that such marriage should be dissolved.[27] During the second reading of the bill Ogilvie insisted the move was not an experiment as some critics had suggested. Ogilvie had corresponded with the New Zealand Attorney-General to ascertain how such legislation was working there since its adoption in 1917. Ogilvie announced that his New Zealand counterpart had replied that it had had no harmful effect on the community, while the Chief Justice in New Zealand was of the same opinion.[28] New Zealand seems to have led the field on this issue in much the same way as it became the first nation to grant votes to women. The New Zealand legislation had an element of mutual consent in its law and was the prototype for the ground-breaking law enacted in South Australia in 1938.

The Tasmanian bill was sent back to the House of Assembly, but the vote on the second reading was defeated by fifteen votes to six.[29] It appears that Ogilvie was not able to move even many of his own party in the House. It certainly showed that he was years ahead of most people in general thinking on no fault divorce. Ogilvie would have defended many clients in divorce matters, even though he was best known for his work in criminal cases. What is more extraordinary in this debate is that Ogilvie was taking a stance which put him at odds with most Catholics, including his own leader, Joe Lyons, who spoke against the bill 'on the principle that anything which made it easier for any individual to obtain divorce would be met with his opposition in any circumstances.'[30] Lyons, unsurprisingly, said he was simply opposed to divorce and to extending facilities for it. Country-Nationalist Ernest Blyth, a Protestant himself, said he was of the opinion that the Church of Rome was right in refusing to recognise divorce in any shape or form. He was 'astonished at the Attorney-General bringing such a bill before the House, and hoped that it would be knocked out on the second reading.'[31]

Ogilvie was undeterred and championed the bill from the point of view of women who proved the genuineness of their want by seeking maintenance orders at Police Courts, and yet could not get a divorce. The bill, he insisted, was not an extension of the divorce position, but was a cure for harsh anomalies. Only four other Labor men supported the bill, but Country-Liberal member Edward Hobbs, who at first opposed it, said he had 'broken down' his

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[27] Finlay, *To Have but not to Hold*, pp.279-280.
[28] *Mercury*, 20 December 1924, p.8.
[29] Finlay, *To Have but not to Hold*, p. 280.
[30] *Mercury*, 20 December, 1924, p.8
[31] *Ibid*

opposition after hearing Ogilvie's explanation of the bill's intent.[32] This exchange provides further insight into Ogilvie's religious stance. In an earlier chapter it was noted that he took a strong stance against 'wowsers' and declared that, if a political opponent called himself a Christian, Ogilvie was glad not to be one. On most evidence, it can be assumed that Ogilvie was a nominal Catholic, perhaps falling into the 'lapsed' variety, which became a fashionable tag later in the twentieth century. In any event it was a bold and visionary commitment to divorce law reform and the ever-ambitious young Ogilvie would have expected Lyons to support the Roman Catholic line on divorce.

Ogilvie's vision and ambitions for Tasmania have been acknowledged by those who benefited from his relentless drive and hard work and even his former political opponents and media sparring partners. The *Mercury* editorial and tribute after his death commented that it had often been said that Ogilvie ran a one-man government. 'Such was his dominating personality that this is largely true,' opined the newspaper.[33] The *Mercury* conceded that: 'Such was his human understanding, however, and so thorough his legal experience, that his own opinion was seldom disputed and the say of the Premier was almost invariably the agreement of Cabinet.' The newspaper, so often a critic in the past, conceded that 'by his initiative, his force, his determination to get things done, he set a standard of achievement hitherto unapproached.' [34]

One man inspired by the vision of Ogilvie is Terry Aulich, a former Tasmanian Labor Education Minister and Senator for sixteen years. Aulich believes Ogilvie's message when he came into office in 1934 was simple – education was the critical factor to build a smarter and stronger economy for all Tasmanians.[35] Ogilvie came into office with a completely reverse view than normal of how to stimulate the economy. While most governments around the world, including the Nationalists in Tasmania, were acting on policies of reducing government spending, sacking or lowering wages of public servants and charging fees for high school education, Ogilvie saw there were other ways to turn Tasmania around. The path forward would include improving education, driving industrialisation through hydro-electric schemes, improved health systems, making low cost housing loans to struggling families and restoring the wages of public servants to their previous level. 'Despite opposition from conservative

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[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Mercury*, 12 June 1939, p.6.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Sunday Tasmanian*, 9 February 2014, p.30.

politicians and the British-based banking profession, the Ogilvie government also gave the jobless a basic income through public works programs,' Aulich writes.[36] The Mount Wellington pinnacle road was a great example of a project designed to stimulate the economy and the future of tourism. Aulich believes that Ogilvie's vision is a reminder that 'smart leaders can go a long way in a state that sometimes gets treated like dirt by our interstate cousins.' [37]

In all of these visionary endeavours, Ogilvie must have known he was taking risks, especially in the fiscal ideas he espoused. The conservative alternative was to do nothing and hope for better economic times, but that was clearly not Ogilvie's style. By the time he was Premier, especially after electoral success in 1937, he had the public onside, even if political opponents, the press and some stalwarts of the trade union movement were less than convinced. At least two figures loom large when historians seek comparisons with Ogilvie, and they were vastly different men from equally different geographic areas – Jack Lang, of New South Wales, and United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Ogilvie did not seek out such comparisons and, although he contemplated strong links with the highly controversial Lang, he later had second thoughts and denied any connection with Lang Labor during the 1934 Tasmanian election campaign.[38]

Ogilvie's relationship with Lang was complicated. In many ways they seemed like a good fit. Neither man was traditional Labor. Lang had grown up in poverty, supplementing the family income by selling newspapers on Sydney streets. He learned in childhood, wrote Manning Clark, 'all about the jungle of life'.[39] His adult life matched his childhood in protecting his patch. He graduated from a Catholic, working-class background working first as an accountant and then estate agent, amassing quite a fortune. He was married to Henry Lawson's wife's sister. Lang had a charisma admired by the little people, and a power to attract men and women to his service. Known as 'the big fella' he was 'tall in height, massive in frame, and vast in ambition.' His detractors among the communists and others on the left judged him to be, not a Labor man, but a mere liberal, a middle-class politician. [40] Lang came to public life as a hero of the Australian battlers, much like Ogilvie, not of the working class but with them. During his unsuccessful bid for power in the 1931 election Ogilvie was inclined to go for broke and join forces with Lang. Such a move would have been risky, but Ogilvie was impatient and

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[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] Townsley, *Tasmania: From Colony to Statehood,* pp. 345-49.
[39] Manning Clark, *A History of Australia*, Vol. VI, Melbourne, 1987, pp. 148-9.
[40] *Ibid.*

frustrated, according to W. A. Townsley, and it was clear that he was distrusted by a large majority in the community and even in his own party, where he quarrelled with several colleagues. Although he attracted high personal success in his Franklin electorate, the wider community preferred to place its trust in the steadiness and integrity of his opponents. Ogilvie's time had not yet come.[41]

It is not difficult to imagine the regard Ogilvie would have for Lang, given the Tasmanian's passion for his home state, threats to go it alone in secession and a less than total commitment to the British Empire. Lang's solution to the misery of the Great Depression shocked and alarmed both left and right wing sympathisers, not to mention the barons of British banking. The Lang Plan went directly to the heart of Australia's difficulties, the crushing burden of debt. The Lang Plan included the suspension of overseas interest payments, a reduction in the interest rate on all domestic public loans to three per cent and the abandonment of the gold standard for one based on the wealth of Australia which he called the 'goods standard.'[42] Little wonder that the Commonwealth and other state representatives recoiled in horror at the repudiation of debt obligations and debauchment of the currency.[43] This would fit well with Ogilvie's declaration in an earlier chapter that 'the test of good government was not the condition of the Treasury finances, but the happiness and prosperity of the people.'[44] In 1933, when still in Opposition, Ogilvie described the banks as the enemy of the Tasmanian people. The interest and exchange for Tasmania exceeded the whole of the direct revenue of the state, he said: 'That was a fact that the National Government would never tell the people.' The only way to improve the position was the reduction of internal and overseas interest. It was impossible for Australia's six million people to meet an overseas interest bill of £32,000,000. Ogilvie mooted the socialisation of credit, which he declared would solve at least two-thirds of the nation's troubles. The banks were engaged in a policy of deflation and there was no equality of sacrifice.[45] Branding the banks as the enemy of the people would have been radical in the extreme and brave or foolhardy depending on your personal bias. Australian society for most of the twentieth century paid great respect to the pillars of society, represented

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[41] Townsley, *Tasmania: From Colony to Statehood,* pp. 344-5.
[42] Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia,* Vol. 4, 1901-1942, Melbourne, 1986, pp. 263-4.
[43] Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia,* pp. 263-4.
[44] M. Roe, `A. G. Ogilvie and the Blend of Van Diemen's Land with Tasmania', *Bulletin of the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies*, Vol. 1, 1986, pp. 43-4.
[45] *Mercury*, 9 June 1933, p. 11.

by the local school headmaster, minister of religion and the bank manager. The odium in which the modern big banks are held would have had no precedent in Ogilvie's day.

It appears that by the time of the 1931 election campaign, Ogilvie had decided to distance himself from Lang. It probably made good politics to do so, while poking barbs at the Nationalist Party. At a meeting at Richmond he said it was dishonest for the Nationalists to link him with Lang and his opponents had deliberately misrepresented the issue.[46] Ogilvie said it was well known that Labor had expelled Lang and would have nothing to do with him and that Ogilvie's party stood for sane and sound finance. Ogilvie could not resist a further barb at Joe Lyons, describing the former Labor Premier as no friend to the man on the land, nor the worker, but who stood for the interest of big financial institutions. This was classical timing, as Lyons was officially to leave the party to lead the United Australia Party on May 5, just two days after Ogilvie's comments.[47] Although it did not help Ogilvie in the 1931 election, it enabled him to gradually improve his image in the electorate as a true Labor man, despite his difficulties with many in the union movement, and to pave the way for a narrow victory in 1934 and a huge win in 1937.

Ogilvie has also been compared with Franklin D. Roosevelt for the ways in which he sought to tackle the aftermath of the Great Depression and get Tasmanian up and running. When Ogilvie travelled to Europe in 1935 Roosevelt was high on his list of those he hoped to meet, along with militant trade unionist J. L. Lewis. Financial restraints and the need to cut short his journey because of mounting issues back home intervened. [48] But it can be assumed Ogilvie was an admirer of Roosevelt and 'The New Deal'. Ogilvie's visions for Tasmania may have been small, compared with a huge nation like the USA, although there is a familiar ring about the need to revolutionise and restructure the way forward in the post-Depression period. Roosevelt was attempting to reverse a post-Depression situation which had created ten million unemployed. Ogilvie's task was equally great, only on a smaller scale. Some of the President's rhetoric also seems similar to Ogilvie's. The New Deal was pragmatic in its scepticism about Utopian and ultimate solutions and its suspicion of the dogmas of the Establishment. The

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[46] *Mercury*, 5 May, 1931, p. 9.
[47] *Mercury*, 5 May 1931, p. 9.
[48] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p. 33.

advice of the American economists had so often been wrong, which led Roosevelt and his New Dealers to distrust the claims of orthodox economic theory.[49]

Ogilvie's vision for a future Tasmania is plain to see. It is typical of the way he led his public life, somewhat irritated with his opponents, but determined to push the state into places the more conservative were not happy to be. His early demise has robbed us of the opportunity to see even more results of where Tasmania may have gone, had he lived another decade or more and remained in office. Many modern politicians, with one eye on the opinion polls and another on the need to appease more conservative elements in their own party, end up standing for nothing in particular. There is little doubt that Ogilvie's vision, tenacity and determination to get things done, stamp him as unique in Tasmanian politics.

The traditional cliché about not speaking ill of the dead mostly applied to Ogilvie in the days after his death. The tributes and eulogies flowed fast. Even his most bitter opponents held back, as is usual, but the tone of the tributes said much about the relationship between Ogilvie and the forces of conservatism. Church leaders, public servants, legal and political entities joined the chorus of praise. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Dr J. D. Simonds, as described earlier in his panegyric, mindful that Ogilvie was one of their own, said that he had warned the Premier, at the time of Prime Minister Lyons' funeral, about overtaxing his strength or succumbing to the strain of excessive work. The Archbishop said he sincerely regretted the loss of an outstanding figure from public life. He was a gifted, talented man with 'a virile character which led him fearlessly to pursue the course of action which he set before him in the service of the public.' The Anglican Bishop of Tasmania, Dr R. S. Hay, described Ogilvie as a very strong and capable leader.[50]

One notable exception about not speaking ill of the dead came during his funeral. It ably demonstrates how Ogilvie was as much a thorn in the side of those on the left as those of the Establishment. It was reported that a hawthorn wreath, all prickles, was presented by some unemployed men, who remained angry with the Premier for telling them to work for Sir Henry Jones, the famous jam maker, or lose their dole payments. The wreath was inscribed with the words, 'Ogilvie, it's your move next', a reference to Ogilvie's dismissive comment to such unemployed men to go to the Huon Valley for fruit picking work.[51]

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[49] William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932-1940*, New York, 1963, p. 334.
[50] *Examiner*, 12 June, 1939, p.8.
[51] L. Robson, *A History of Tasmania, Vol. II: Colony and State from 1856 to the 1980s*, Melbourne, 1981, p. 479

Ogilvie's complicated relationship with the Public Service, as portrayed earlier in this thesis, was evident in a tribute from the Public Service Commissioner, R. J. Meagher. He described Ogilvie as a hard taskmaster, possessed, nevertheless, by a good nature: 'He was unceasingly active from the day he became Premier and he in turn expected similar promptness in action from all around him.'[52] The Commissioner said Ogilvie not only expected virility of action – he got it: 'Strain and strenuousness was the order of the day.' It was apparent, said Meagher, that his health was being impaired by his actions: 'He was aware of it, but he would not relax. May he rest in peace.'[53] The former Professor of Economics at the University of Tasmania, Torleiv Hytten, endorsed that image. Hytten described the new Premier as a 'bundle of energy, but also a bundle of nerves ..... he nearly drove the Public Service to distraction with his energy.' Hytten was official adviser to the state government on economic issues and accompanied Ogilvie on his 1935 travels. Ogilvie had decided against taking on a ministry. But he was involved in all facets of the government and acted quickly with a memorandum to ministers, soon after the election, to provide a weekly record of progressive steps taken. Ogilvie was clearly a man in a hurry to bring about change in his own style.[54]

The Southern Law Society, which had once sought to have Ogilvie debarred, joined in the tributes, rueing the fact that the strain of public affairs had hastened his end. He was described as a brilliant and successful advocate, especially in jury cases, matching skill and eloquence with sheer hard work. The Legislative Council, for so many years containing his most bitter adversaries, acknowledged his talent and commitment to his party in noting the tragic passing of so brilliant a life. Former Chief Justice of Tasmania, Sir Herbert Nicholls, said Tasmania had lost one of its finest brains and a man of action: 'His whole career was one of tremendous energy. He saw so clearly what had to be done and set about it so mercilessly to himself to achieve what he thought to be the right end that I fear he wore himself out.'[55] Sir Herbert recalled examining some law papers of Ogilvie when he was a student, which revealed him to be the most brilliant student seen in many years. Sir Walter Lee, who was a perennial political opponent of Ogilvie, expressed his regrets at the passing of his adversary, so soon after the state and nation had lost Joe Lyons: 'Though I differed widely with the late Premier on matters of political policy, and in methods, there is no doubt that he was a man of marked

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[52] *Ibid.*
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Roe, *Albert Ogilvie and Stymie Gaha*, p.19.
[55] *Ibid.*

ability, keen on debate, and at all times a strong champion of the rights and interests of Tasmania.[56]

Even after his death Albert Ogilvie had the ability to divide opinion and stir up his enemies. An imposing statue of him stands prominently on the lawns outside Parliament House in Hobart. He is the only Tasmanian Premier to be so honoured. In 1947, times were still tough in the post-war period. The statue was built with public subscriptions of nearly £1000, but there was a shortfall of about £400 required for a pedestal. The Labor Government sought to have the pedestal paid for from public money. When a bill to authorise the payment was debated, a colourful Liberal character, Reg Wright, objected on the grounds that Ogilvie was not a fit and proper person to be so honoured, based on his 'difficulties' of twenty years before, when Ogilvie was forced to resign when Attorney-General in the Lyons cabinet.[57] There was uproar in the House, and the Speaker, J. J. Dwyer, ruled Wright out of order by bringing up events from the past which had no bearing on the current debate. Wright insisted it was in conflict with the standards the people required in a public man, given that taxpayers were being asked to pay the bill. Other Liberals argued that there were enough memorials to the former Premier, including a high school named in his honour and plaques at Hastings Caves, Mt Wellington and Tarraleah. A Labor member, Charley Aylett, said it was degrading for members of the Opposition to bring up 'filth' as they were attempting to do. The bill passed 15-14 on party lines.[58]

A week later the bill found a different reception in the Legislative Council. It was as if the ghost of Albert Ogilvie was there, digging the conservatives in the ribs. This generation of the Upper House would have their day, dumping the bill ten votes to five. Alexander Lillico repeated Wright's mantra from the Lower House that no effort had been made to honour other past premiers and that Ogilvie had been forced to resign from a ministerial position.[59] Those who believe in an afterlife could be forgiven for an imagination of Ogilvie looking down on the Legislative Council debate and smiling at still being an irritation to those on the right, eight years after his physical demise.

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[56] *Ibid*

[57] Sir Reg Wright was a colourful barrister and politician, somewhat in the mould of the fictional *Rumpole of the Bailey*. He served in the State Parliament from 1946-49 before resigning and was elected to the Senate, where he assumed almost legendary status over 30 years, voting against his own party on 150 occasions. He resigned from the Liberal Party to stand as an independent for a few months before leaving the Federal Parliament to return to the law in 1978.

[58] *Mercury*, 13 March 1947, p. 11.

[59] *Mercury*, 20 March 1947, p. 4.

# CONCLUSION

Albert Ogilvie seems to be bookended between two other Australians with a legal background who made their mark with a stance against handed down power and privilege through birth. The lives of Andrew Inglis Clark, Albert Ogilvie and Geoffrey Robertson span more than a century, but the three men seem connected by their attitude to the Establishment of their time, as well as a commitment to humanity and a somewhat mischievous pride in prodding away at the pompous and privileged. Robertson has carved out a brilliant career as a human rights lawyer and leading intellectual thinker in both Britain and his Australian homeland. Robertson believes he will never be accepted wholeheartedly by the lingering notion of a British class system. Robertson writes, with impish glee, that when he was about to cross-examine the late Princess Diana, he found himself described in *The Times* as 'anti-Establishment, republican and Australian, presumably in ascending order of horror.'[1] His springboard to university life, and degrees in arts and law, along with later successes, came through Epping Boys High School, rather than an exclusive private school.[2] Ogilvie became the pin-prick in the flesh of the upper classes via Christian Brothers' teaching, while his modern contemporary chose a similar path through a state school in New South Wales.

Ogilvie had a short, but volatile life of achievement. He was able confidently to mix a brilliant career in the law and politics with his sporting interests and family life. He was always a man in a hurry, eager to get things done, frustrated by plodders and often acerbic and biting in his condemnation of those he opposed. He was an irritant to the Establishment and the trappings of higher society. Wowsers, journalists, political opponents and witnesses in the court room all felt the stings of his aggressive rhetoric and personality. Yet he clearly

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[1] Geoffrey Robertson, *Dreaming too Loud: Reflections on a Race Apart*, North Sydney, 2013, p. xviiii.
[2] Robertson, *Dreaming too Loud*, p. 261.

demonstrated his humanity for the less fortunate. He was a man born in the nineteenth century, whose vision and style would have made him very much at home in the twenty-first century. Some of his views and commitments would have outraged his political opponents of the day, and even those of otherwise similar political persuasion. Mooting no fault divorce as early as 1923, when his then leader Joe Lyons was a devout Catholic, known to be vehemently opposed to any form of divorce, could be seen as an act of political suicide or radicalism gone mad. And this from a nominal Catholic himself. The same would apply to moves such as getting rid of state governors and the Legislative Council.

In hindsight we know these seemingly controversial ideas must have resonated with an electorate, usually branded as conservative. My guess is that Ogilvie understood the people better than most politicians. He sensed that sufficient numbers were in agreement with his radicalism, although they did not shout it out loud. Yet, throughout all his public brawling, his surviving daughter tells of a kinder, gentler man, one who smiled often, and who was able to relax at home despite an almost unprecedented workload. Pat Rennie was too young to have digested much of the cut and thrust of politics. She was but sixteen when he died. Her most lasting memories are of happy family times and a rampant sense of humour at play in the family. She describes her uncle, Eric, as the joker of the family, while Albert would laugh at the antics of his brother.[3] Albert Ogilvie seems to have had the last laugh on his opponents in the five years of his premiership until his early death.

We can only guess at what may have happened to Ogilvie had he been granted another decade of public life. Others have speculated about the High Court or a move to federal politics, possibly even prime ministership for Ogilvie. The imminence of World War II and the huge human and political ramifications, at home and abroad, make such

[3] Interview with Pat Rennie, 2 November 2014.

speculation even more difficult and mostly pointless and irrelevant. What can be said is that, despite his flaws and difficulties, Albert Ogilvie was unique in the Tasmania of the twentieth century. The Australian states have produced some colourful and strong-willed premiers, ranging from Henry Bolte, Don Dunstan or Joh Bjelke-Petersen. They may have been miles apart in political persuasion or charismatic appeal, but they reshaped their respective states, for better or worse. Ogilvie in no way resembles any of the aforementioned, but his legacy is at least the equal of them. Among prime ministers, perhaps there are hints of Paul Keating or Gough Whitlam in Ogilvie. All were willing to take risks, to genuinely look into the future to effect change and take the public with them on sometimes controversial issues in which they believed.

Away from the parliament or the courtroom, I like to think of Ogilvie as a somewhat mischievous risk-taker, driving his car a little too fast, enjoying a beer or a bet out of hours, taunting the pompous, annoying the sanctimonious wowsers of his day, genuinely extolling the delights of Tasmania and enjoying a joke with his family or friends. It sounds clichéd in the extreme to describe him as a flawed political genius, humanitarian or visionary, but he was all that and more. One curious aspect of examining his life is that he is not better known to current Tasmanians. This could be a generational factor as he was dead long before most living Tasmanians were born. Loved and hated in equal measure, Albert Ogilvie was unique among the political players who have occupied the Tasmanian stage. Comparisons with others of more recent fame are pointless. Ogilvie was unique, certainly different from those who occupied high office before or after his premiership.

For the final words of this thesis, remarks delivered at Ogilvie's grave by his successor Edmund Dwyer-Gray seem appropriate. Dwyer-Gray spent a mere 180 days as Premier before being replaced by Robert Cosgrove. Dwyer-Gray spent twenty-five years as a political colleague of Ogilvie's. He spoke of Ogilvie's unflinching loyalty to members of his

government: 'His amazing abilities, his quenchless strength of character, made him a dynamic personality, or a dominating personality, if you prefer to put in that way, but he was never a domineering personality.'[4] Dwyer-Gray said Ogilvie loved Tasmania and its people too dearly and if he had loved them less it may have prolonged his life, so driven was he to make Tasmania a better place. The new Premier said of his predecessor that he died a martyr to public duty: 'As he reached pre-eminence, as he certainly did, his principles and outlook on life did not alter in the least, and to the very day of his death, he was prouder of a poor man's friendship that a rich man's favour. All know that.'[5] Dwyer-Gray concluded by saying that Ogilvie despised all assumption of social superiority: 'As Premier, his conduct was always becomingly dignified and he could meet the world's greatest with all the courtesy required, the plain man in the street, and the struggling worker. They were the real friends of his heart.'[6] Dwyer-Gray said Ogilvie was ever true to those struggling Tasmanians, 'with a kindly greeting and a ready smile for the horniest-handed man of toil.' [7]

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[4] *Voice,* 26 August 1939, p.6.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

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